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OR,

THE STOLEN SISTER.

BY J. R. CALDWELL.

AUTHOR OF DIME NOVEL No. 388. THE PRIVATEER'S BRIDE.

NEW YORK:
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BY L. R. GOLDWATER

A copy of this Novel No. 222, The Philanthropist's Friend

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THE OCEAN OUTLAW.

CHAPTER L

The mid-day watch was set, beneath the blaze of light,
When there came a cry from the tall mast-head: "A sail! a sail
in sight!"
And o'er the far horizon a snowy speck appeared,
And every eye was strain'd to watch the vessel as she near'd.

Anon.

Beautiful Florida! With thy orange and magnolia groves, with the sapphire ocean laving thy level shores, and the balmy breath of the tropics sweeping from the Gulf across thy perfumed forests, with thy romantic glens, and canes, and harbors, the haunt of the wild buccaneer, and the refuge of the storm-driven mariner: it is of thee, O beautiful land of romance! that I would speak.

A few miles from St. Augustine, in the State of Florida, about the year 1825, stood a lone and beautiful cottage. Its many and convenient outbuildings; its wild and truly romantic scenery, plainly indicated that the owner was a person of wealth and cultivated taste.

The cottage occupied the summit of a gentle eminence that sloped gradually down until its base was washed by the ocean waves, a hundred yards from the door; while, on the other side, the declivity terminated in a wild forest dell, through which a stream of considerable magnitude made its way over a rocky bed; its course interrupted by

many miniature cascades, until it finally dashed down a craggy precipice, and was received in a tiny lake, whose clear water reflected like a mirror the outlines of the gigantic trees that grew on its margin, and the simple wild flower that dipped its leaves in the pure element.

A large garden, filled with the choicest floral productions, surrounded the mansion, perfuming the air with their exotic fragrance, while the orange and lime-trees, bending under their golden burthen, formed a delightful retreat from the scorching rays of a mid-day sun; and the cottage, whose walls were half-concealed by vines and creeping plants, seemed the very idea of rural beauty.

A striking contrast to this beautiful arrangement was apparent in the lofty forest that, within a short distance, stood in native grace and strength, having scarcely been invaded by the woodman; and so closely were the branches entwined together, and so dense the luxuriant foliage, that it was difficult to obtain even a glimpse of the blue arch above.

A rough pier skirted one side of a small cave at the foot of the garden, to which was moored a boat, furnished with a mast and sail, which, in fine weather, and a smooth sea, formed a very pleasant mode of conveyance to St. Augustine, or any other voyage of similar brevity.

The owner of the place we have so briefly described was known in the neighborhood by the name of Ralph Gray. He had first appeared there some fifteen years prior to the opening of our story, representing himself as a sea-captain, who was anxious to obtain a quiet home for his family, where he could safely leave them while absent, in his wandering profession. He was apparently about forty years of age, possessed of a singularly tall, commanding person, rather handsome features, and bore unmistakable proofs of having, in the course of his life, been acquainted with polished society. He was very reserved in his manner, saying very little to any one, and promptly foiled every attempt made by curious strangers to learn anything of his history previous to his appearance among them.

After spending a day or two in looking over the neighboring country, he made a selection that suited him, and at once set about clearing a small plot of ground, erecting a house, and attending to other preliminary matters. This done, he departed in the same secret, mysterious manner in which he came, leaving no one the wiser as to where he had gone, or when he intended to return to his purchase.

Six months passed without bringing any news from him, and many stories were whispered among the gossips to account for the non-appearance of their strange visitor.

Suddenly, however, he returned, accompanied by an elderly female, whose business seemed to consist in looking after a little girl, some three years of age. These, together with an old seaman, who, to use his own expression, was hardly sea-worthy, comprised his family.

Gray remained but a short time at his new home. After the lapse of a few days, he left little Ethel and Mrs. Mills in the care of Silas Morton (the old seaman) and again departed.

For a time the inhabitants of Glen's Cottage, (for such was the name conferred by Ralph Gray upon his purchase) found it rather lonely; but Morton was soon on familiar terms with nearly every person in the neighborhood, and being generally liked, it resulted in the gradual admission of the family into the limited circle of society the place afforded.

Mrs. Mills, too, had a happy faculty of insinuating herself into the good graces of those around her, and little Ethel was the pet of every one. So, in due time, they found their place more agreeable than was at first anticipated.

In one thing Ralph Gray had been fortunate, if in no other, in the selection of Silas Morton for his steward; no man ever had one in whom he could place more implicit confidence.

The old sailor's life had been a checkered one—thirty years of it had passed on the ocean in every clime, from the torrid sands of Africa to the frozen regions of the

Arctic Circle. Want of early education had prevented him from rising to any important position in his calling, yet, in the humble sphere in which his lot was cast, his simple, unaffected piety had commanded a respect and exerted an influence upon officers and men that many superior to him in education and social standing would have failed to accomplish. By prudence and unwearied exertion, he had laid by quite a fortune; but the sudden failure of a merchant in whose hands his funds were placed, reduced him to penury; and that, too, when his advancing years were rapidly unfitting him for duties on ship board; consequently, the situation offered him by Gray was gladly accepted, as the duties were light and well suited to his mind.

Towards little Ethel, all the warm feelings of his nature were drawn. Nothing that would contribute to her happiness, within his power to do, was left undone; and the child learned to repay him with little acts of kindness that strengthened the strong feeling of friendship that existed between them.

With few exceptions, Morton was the only person in the neighborhood that could boast of any acquaintance with the eccentric Captain Gray, and was the only one admitted to his confidence.

During the brief visits which the latter made at home, he passed nearly the whole time in wandering over his plantation, accompanied by the former; pointing out the improvements he wished made, and giving general directions about his business. But these visits were so seldom made, and never prolonged beyond two or three days, that for the most part, Morton was left to manage the farm as best suited his fancy.

As yet the mystery connected with the Grays had not been explained to the satisfaction of a curious public. Though Morton had been thoroughly catechised, the amount of information obtained was very trifling. It was just this: His employer was a sea captain; went to sea; and was, to all appearance, very wealthy. It was also

observed that when he came home, he always came from the West Indies, but never in his own vessel.

This was all that could be learned upon the subject, for Silas Morton and Mrs. Mills had both been engaged at St. Augustine, and, of course, knew no more of his former history than he chose to tell them; and as he did not choose to tell them anything, the news-mongers had to content themselves with setting Gray down as a man who had reasons of his own for wishing to remain unknown. This conclusion satisfied all parties, and the Glen cottagers continued to live in a quiet, retired manner, up to the time when our story commences.

Fifteen years had not produced any material change in the neighborhood of Glen cottage; but it had transformed Ethel from a pretty child into a lovely girl of eighteen. Though unlike Captain Gray in haughty and reserved demeanor, she possessed, like him, a person considerably above the medium height, yet so perfectly symmetrical, and characterized by such unaffectedly graceful movements, that it would seldom be noticed, and with ways gentle and winning among her friends, but dignified and repelling to all undue familiarity, she commanded the respect, love and admiration of all who knew her. Almost unaided by teachers, she had possessed herself of an education that did honor to her love of knowledge, and that indicated a mind of no common order. Having a natural passion for music, she passed much of her leisure time with the harp or guitar; either of which she touched with a skilful hand. But her chief delight consisted in administering to the wants of the poor and afflicted. Her father's bounty supplied her with abundant means for her gratuitous distributions; and many a widow and orphan, (made so by husband and father finding a grave in the ocean) by her kind assistance, had been relieved from eternal want. Consequently, it was not strange that wherever she was known she was generally applauded, her beauty complimented, and her good opinion eagerly sought for by youths of both sexes.

CHAPTER II.

It was a beautiful afternoon in the early part of autumn, that a boat, manned by two or three negroes, might have been seen rapidly approaching the shore in the direction of Glen's cottage. As it neared the beach, a young man stood up in the stern, and appeared to be taking a survey of the coast.

At that moment, Ethal, accompanied by Silas Morton, stepped from the house, and walked toward the pier. But on seeing the approaching boat, they stopped to examine it.

"That looks like Stephen Granger, Miss Ethel," said Morton, lowering the spy-glass with which he had hastily scanned the little craft, "so I fancy we shall have to give up our little voyage for the present. I wish that chap would give us a wide berth, for do you know, I don't like him over well; and, if I am not mistaken, we shall find he's sailing under false colors yet."

"Perhaps you are prejudiced in your judgments, Silas," answered Ethel, slightly blushing, "and he is rather a strange fellow, but he may not be as bad as you think he is, after all."

"Don't tell me, Miss Ethel; I've cruised round the world too much, and seen too many chaps of his cut, to be humbugged very easy."

"But he is in the employ of my father, and may bring some news from him; so, for that reason, if for no other, I ought to treat him civilly."

"I know he pretends to be in Captain Gray's employ, and is, for what I know; but for all that, I want you to be careful that you do not believe all the fine yarns he spins, or make any promises."

"Why, Silas," answered Ethel, laughing, "I shall begin

to think you are jealous, you make such a serious matter of nothing; Mr. Granger is well enough, but I'm not going to run away with him, as you seem to fear I am."

"If Mr. Granger is such a one as your father would recommend, why does he always come when he is away, and even wants you to promise not to let him know that he comes here at all? You can't make that look honest, any way."

"What makes you think he asked me to make such a promise?"

"I unintentionally overheard him, Miss, when he was here about six months ago; when he first let out that he was one of your father's men, and went on with all that lingo—how some one had set Captain Gray against him. You see, it don't sound likely, that he would keep an officer that he didn't like better than all that comes to."

"Then you think the story was untrue."

"No doubt of it. When I heard that he belonged to your father's craft, I thought it strange that he did not tell us that part in the beginning."

"I do not see what good it would do Mr. Granger to tell such a story, unless it was true."

"In all probability he had a reason for so doing, and maybe you will know what it is some time."

"Well! there is no harm done, for I did not make the promise Mr. Granger wished me to; and if my father ever returns I can learn whether your suspicions are correct or not."

"I guess, after Captain Gray hears the story, we shan't see any more of Mr. Granger in this cruising ground, Miss Ethel."

"I wish my father would come; it seems as though he had been gone an age. It is strange that he will never tell us anything about his business."

"You know as much about it as any one does; for some reason he keeps a mystery over his doings that will baffle sharper eyes than mine; time will probably explain it. But I may as well be off, for I see Mr. Granger

close by, and he will not be obliged to me for my company."

So saying, Morton walked away, and left Ethel to receive her guest, who had landed, and was approaching her.

The new comer was a young man in the neighborhood of twenty-five, and, at the first glance, would have been pronounced the perfection of masculine beauty in face and figure; but one skilled in human nature would have at once detected in his countenance an expression indicative of much cunning, and sinister motives, that rendered his otherwise handsome features repulsive and forbidding.

He was dressed in the usual costume of the sailor, and the full, white trowsers, blue jacket, pumps and broad-brimmed hat, all appeared very becoming, and it was very apparent, from the free and easy way he assumed, that he was aware of his personal advantages, and confident of his ability to please, although he noticed that, for some reason, Ethel did not appear to welcome him quite as warmly as usual, and such was the case. For notwithstanding the good opinion with which she had regarded him, the words of Morton, in whose judgment she had the most implicit confidence, sunk into her heart.

She knew little of the world and its ways, and never thought of distrusting one who was, to all appearance, a gentleman, and moreover, possessed the warmest friendship for her family.

But the words of her old friend opened a new train of thought. She had been wont to look upon Granger as one who could, if he chose, be a very equable companion, and had always welcomed him with pleasure, as she would any other friend.

She now saw the matter in a different light; she saw in a moment that there were some suspicious circumstances connected with his visits, and wondered she had never looked at it in the same light before.

Ethel had seen Stephen Granger, for the first time, about two years before. He had become acquainted with her by accident, in some of his ramblings, and at once be-

gan a series of attentions, that, in time, began to assume quite a tender aspect, though he had never made any formal declaration of intentions. Some six months before, (as has been already intimated,) he informed her that he was in the employ of her father, and requested a silence on her part, in relation to his visits—giving the before-mentioned reasons to account for it. Though, at the time, she did not suspect anything wrong, still, for some reason, she hardly knew what, she had declined giving him the desired promise, but thought nothing more of the matter, until it was alluded to by Silas Morton.

However, Granger's wishes had been complied with thus far; for since the time referred to, Ralph Gray had not been at home, and, consequently, remained in ignorance of the acquaintance existing between Ethel and his first officer.

Ethel had full time for reflection, while her visitor was engaged in securing his boat, and making his way through the garden to the place where Martin had just left her.

"Good day, Miss Ethel," he said, gaily, at the same time extending his hand with the air of an old acquaintance. "I am fortunate, indeed, in finding you at home. I think you usually take advantage of all the fine weather to go on your many charity tours among the poor, benighted heathens of this outlandish part of the world, and, if I am not mistaken, you were just on the wing now."

The tone and manner of Granger would have disgusted Ethel, had she been in her most amiable mood; and, under existing circumstances, she thought his bold, familiar language unendurable, and therefore replied with cutting coolness, and without touching the extended hand:

"Mr. Granger seems to have a *very exalted* opinion of society here; an opinion to which I cannot agree, as I do not find friends such *barbarians* as you seem to think them."

This cool retort took Granger quite by surprise; he had never seen his companion in such a mood before, and, at first, attributed the change to the unwanted manner in

which he had addressed her. And he very wisely resolved to change his tactics at once.

"Pardon me, Miss Gray," he said, in a humble tone, "if I have unintentionally offended. I assure you, the remark I made was only said in jest, and I hope you will forgive the first offence."

"Your offence, as you term it, is easily pardoned, sir," said Ethel, as she turned away. "But you will please excuse me, for I was about to visit St. Augustine, and I think Mr. Morton is quite ready to accompany me."

"If I am really pardoned, Miss Gray, permit me to be your escort; my boat is at your service, if you will accept it."

Ethel was vexed, but she saw that the quickest way to get rid of her unwelcome visitor, would be to accept his invitation, and she determined to inform Granger of the opinion she entertained of him, should an opportunity offer.

For some time Granger attempted to get up a conversation on general subjects, but with ill success—Ethel only replying in monosyllables to his well-coined speeches. At length, however, she looked up, and said:

"I suppose you have seen my father lately; it is so long since he has visited us, that we begin to feel quite uneasy."

"Yes! I saw him at Havana, a few days ago; he seemed in fine spirits, and said he should be at home before long. I am also happy to say that the unjust suspicions he has entertained in regard to myself are entirely removed. He assured me that I was restored to his confidence, so I ventured to acquaint him with my visits to his family, and ask his permission to continue them, and, I am happy to say, my request was graciously granted."

"If your character has been unjustly assailed, I am glad to learn that you are restored to favor," responded Ethel.

Stephen Granger saw that something was wrong; but he was rather at a loss to divine the cause. His reception at Glen Cottage had always been so cordial that he

he inferred he was high in favor, and had resolved that the present opportunity should not pass, and leave him in ignorance of his real standing in the estimation of Miss Gray. For reasons that will appear hereafter, he was anxious to carry out his plans before Captain Gray returned, notwithstanding the good terms on which he professed to be with him. And though Ethel was in anything but an agreeable mood, he had no idea of being frightened at what *might* prove in the end nothing but a woman's whim.

"Allow me, Miss Gray," he said, in a grave voice, "to inquire if anything has happened to induce you to change your opinion in regard to myself? for I had entertained the idea, though perhaps without cause, that I was, at least, looked upon by you in the light of a friend!"

"Mr. Granger!" answered Ethel, with that quiet dignity so characteristic of herself, "I will answer your questions frankly. I admit that, until to-day, I have looked upon you as a—a friend; but circumstances, that you will not be at a loss to divine, if my suspicions are correct, have convinced me that I have been deceived—and in a manner that will admit of no palliation. When my father returns, I shall be happy to learn that the story you have just told me is *true*; but I fear that an opposite conclusion will be the result of an interview with him. And now, if you please, we will return; I do not care to visit my friends to-day."

Granger bit his lip, and in spite of his efforts to appear calm, a fierce light shot from his eyes, that did not escape the notice of Ethel; but he almost immediately mastered his feelings, and answered in a very subdued voice:

"I know not what circumstances have induced you to form a judgment so harsh and unjust; but a consciousness of innocence makes me confident that, at some future time, you will be convinced that I have acted in every respect like an honorable man."

"If I ever learn that Mr. Granger has been judged with

undue harshness, it will give me pleasure," said Ethel, coolly.

Her companion made no answer; but turning away to hide his rage, he put his boat about, with the intention of returning. But at that moment she was struck by a flaw of wind, and, before he had time to think, was completely upset.

As the boat went over, Granger's foot became entangled in a coil of loose line that held him firmly, notwithstanding the desperate efforts he made to free himself. And the negroes, being unable to swim, there seemed no alternative for Ethel but to perish alone.

But the accident had been witnessed by a young man on the shore, who sprang down the bank, plunged into the water—and, after the utmost exertions, succeeded in bringing the drowning maiden safe to land. He then turned to look for Granger, but saw that he had released himself, and was swimming rapidly over the waves toward the shore; while the two darkies, who had managed to get astride the inverted boat, sat there, the very picture of black despair.

"You seem to have met with an accident, shipmate," said the young stranger, who was attired in the uniform of the British Navy, and appeared to be about the same age of Granger, "and as your boat don't seem in a condition to proceed on her voyage immediately, you will, perhaps, accept the use of mine to convey the lady home. I have one less than half-a-mile from here, that is entirely at your service."

"You will add another favor to the already immense debt of gratitude I owe you," said Ethel, "by assisting me to reach home, which is near by."

"Your wishes shall be at once complied with," he answered, and then added, in a gay voice: "I hope you will not feel under the least obligation, as I can only consider myself highly favored to have it in my power to rescue a lady from danger."

"Your assistance came in very good time, sir," said Grange, coolly; "but as the lady's position is rather un-

comfortable, we had better take measures to improve it. If you will inform me where your boat is to be found, I will go after it at once."

"I will go for it myself, and will return presently," replied the other, without noticing the ungracious speech of Granger, who, in addition to the unfortunate issue of his love-making, was mortified that circumstances had prevented him from being the one to save Ethel from a watery grave, instead of a stranger stepping in to rob him of the honor.

In a very short time the young Englishman returned with his boat, and assisted the unfortunate voyagers to embark.

"Do you think your darkies can hold on until we return? or shall we set them on shore first?" he asked, looking at Granger.

"If they can't hold on, let them go to the devil," he answered, forgetting for a moment the presence of Miss Gray, who at once interposed.

"I hope you will not think of going away, and leaving those poor fellows in that situation," she said, addressing the stranger. "A few moment's delay will be of no consequence to me, and may save their lives."

"Well, then, let us go back after the black cattle with all possible despatch, or *they may take cold*," said Granger.

The boat was immediately turned toward the shipwrecked negroes, and, in a few moments, had them all on board, safe and sound. They then took the oars, and very soon the little craft entered the cove, at the foot of Captain Gray's garden, and landed its cargo on the pier in safety.

The young seaman declined stopping, volunteering to return with Granger, and assist him in the recovery of his boat.

The offer was accepted, (though somewhat ungraciously,) and he turned to make his adieu to Ethel.

"Will you favor me with your name?" she said, with

an air of interest that made Granger turn away, with a muttered curse of rage and jealousy.

"My name is Howard," he answered, bowing; "with your permission, I will give myself the pleasure of calling to-morrow to inquire in regard to your health, which, I fear, will be endangered by this unwarranted exposure."

"The person to whom I am indebted for life will always be a welcome visitor."

"Thank you! But allow me to repeat that I can't permit you to feel in the least indebted; the obligation is wholly on my part."

So saying, the gallant young Englishman politely wished her good night.

The boat pulled off, and she slowly walked toward the house, where she was met by Silas Morton, who, alarmed by her appearance, would not rest until he had learned all that had transpired.

Howard, in the meantime, returned with Granger toward the scene of the late disaster. On the way, the latter, freed from the restraint that the presence of Miss Gray imposed upon him, rallied, and became more sociable. He professed the utmost gratitude to his companion for his timely assistance in recovering his intended, as he designated Ethel—hoped he should have the pleasure of seeing him again, and of continuing an acquaintance begun under such unusual circumstances. They found the boat as they had left it; and, in a little time it was righted, the water bailed out and ready for sea. The evening being somewhat advanced, they lost no time in steering for St. Augustine, which they reached without accident, about midnight.

"I suppose I shall see you to-morrow?" said Howard, as Granger turned to leave him.

"I am sorry to say that I shall be obliged to leave town to-night on account of important business, otherwise I should be happy to see you, and accompany you to Miss Gray's; as it is, however, you must excuse me. Good night!"

"Good night!" repeated Howard, as he walked away,

busying his mind with reflections on his day's adventure, and in thanking fortune that Granger's business prevented him from being his companion in his intended visit to Glen's Cottage.

At an early hour the following morning, agreeably to appointment, Howard presented himself at the residence of Captain Gray. He was received by Ethel with unaffected pleasure, and at once set about making his call as agreeable as possible.

"I hope you experienced no ill effects from the accident yesterday," he began, after one or two common-place remarks.

Ethel assured him that she had sustained no serious injury, and the conversation turned on various topics of interest, in the course of which, Howard alluded to some scenes in his own history, and gained some insight into that of his companion.

Ernest Howard was the younger son of a wealthy English gentleman, and consequently entitled to make his own fortune in the world. But possessing a well-cultivated and energetic mind, he looked forth into the world, and saw that fame and honor could both be obtained by patience and perseverance. With this mark in view, he entered the navy at fifteen years of age, as midshipman, and had continued to work his way from one post to another, always discharging his duties with faithfulness and promptitude, until, at the age of twenty-five, he held the commission of second lieutenant on board H. M. ship, Windsor, that had been cruising in the vicinity of the West Indies, in search of a notorious piratical schooner, known as the Sea Vulture, whose daring deeds, and seemingly invincible character, had acquired a terrible renown. A few days previous the Windsor had put into St. Augustine, and Howard, who was passionately fond of hunting, had taken that opportunity to engage in his favorite sport, and, while so engaged, had witnessed the accident that befel Granger's boat, in time to render Miss Gray the assistance already mentioned.

It was late before Lieutenant Howard rose to go. The

him, the evening had passed much more pleasantly than was anticipated. He had found Ethel possessed of a degree of intelligence and refinement that he little expected to find developed in one who had passed her life so exclusively. He thought it a strange plant to spring from such a soil, and it was with a feeling of regret, that he reflected on the improbability of seeing her again, as his vessel was expected to sail the next day. The more he thought of the matter, the more strange did it appear to him, that one, with her refined tastes and ladylike accomplishments, could be the affianced bride of such a man as Granger, whose face and figure was, in his opinion, his only recommendation to a woman like Ethel Gray. Truly, he thought to himself, love is blind, not to see through a character so transparent. But after-experience showed Lieutenant Howard that Granger was a more accomplished deceiver than he took him to be, and was even able to mystify as *wise* a person as himself, when occasion required it. As for our heroine, she could not help being pleased with the gentlemanly manners and polished address of her visitor, independent of the feeling of yesterday, she felt toward him as the preserver of her life; and very possibly she might have entertained sentiments of a more tender nature. If so, it was a subordinate feeling, of which she was unconscious at the time; simply a seed sown, that, under favorable circumstances, might take root and spring up.

CHAPTER III.

After bidding Lieutenant Howard good night, Granger rapidly retraced his steps toward his boat. He reached it in a few minutes; and, taking his place in the stern, ordered the negroes to give way. They seemed to understand their destination, for they pulled off in perfect silence, and in less than ten minutes they brought their boat alongside of a small schooner that had nothing about it that indicated it to be anything but a common merchantman, except two or three guns she carried, and there was nothing very strange in that, as many vessels carried them at that time, as a protection against the pirates that infested some parts of the ocean for some years after that date.

"Call all hands, and get under way as soon as may be, Mr. Kendel," said Granger, as he mounted the deck, and walked aft, with an air that plainly showed he was commander. "We have a fine breeze, and, before daylight, we shall make a good offing, and be well on our way home."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the mate, for such he was, who was addressed as Mr. Kendel, and stepping forward, he proceeded to execute the captain's orders. In a few minutes the sleepy crew came on deck, yawning and rubbing their eyes, and evidently but half awake. However, every man was soon at his post, and the little craft, spreading her white canvas to the wind, swept gracefully out of the harbor, and the shore was quickly lost to view amid the hazy darkness.

For some time Granger continued to walk the deck with a hasty stride, stopping now and then to cast his eyes aloft, to see that everything was arranged with proper precision. Suddenly he stopped, and seating himself on

a gun-carriage, remained for a long time, apparently lost in reflection; while two or three of the men were collected in a knot, forward, listening to the account of his adventure ashore, which was given, with sundry embellishments, by one of the darkies who accompanied him.

"Rather think Masser Granger won't go to see his lady lub agen wery soon," said the negro, with a low chuckle. "She was offish, a little bit, and didn't seem no ways 'fessionate like."

"What was the matter, Jack, that made the girl so hard to please?"

"Bress me, but how should I know anything about it, and if I did, d'ye s'pose I'd 'vulge massa's secret?"

"What are you jabbering about, you black rascal?" said Granger, who, unperceived, had approached near enough to hear the last part of the conversation, "take that, and learn to keep that cursed black tongue of yours still!" he continued, as he laid his heavy cane over the shoulders of the frightened black, who beat a rapid retreat, muttering:

"Massa pretty consid'ble cross; wonder what the debbil ail him; 'feard it don't agree with him very well to go ashore."

"I wish to be called in about two hours, Mr. Kendel," said Granger, as he turned away, and descended to the cabin, leaving the men to the full enjoyment of the story related by Jack.

For the next two hours the vessel bounded gaily forward, before a fine, wholesale breeze, and the watch on deck were seated around in various groups, spinning yarns or singing songs, to pass away the lazy hours which must intervene before the watch could be exchanged, and relieve them. Though apparently in the best possible humor, their conversation would have convinced a stranger that they were as rough a set as could well be found. Their talk was all so mixed up with oaths and imprecations, that one would have thought they were vieing with each other for the mastery in profanity, and the occasional bursts of laughter following the recital of brutal jests,

rung on the evening air as though devils had broke loose from the infernal regions, and were assembled for a jubilee.

At the expiration of the time set by Granger, to be called, Kendel knocked at his state-room door. He immediately awoke, and taking from his trunk a small canvas bag, went on deck.

The night, or rather the morning, was now clear, and, for a few moments, he stood looking around, as though disappointed in not seeing something he was in search of. Suddenly, however, his eye settled on a point amid the waste of waters, that proved, on close inspection, to be a small island, (if a few rocks, covered with sand, that drifted like snow over them, were worthy of the name.) Insignificant as it was, however, it was an object of interest to him. He gave orders to alter their course a little, and in a short time they had approached the land as near as it was safe to venture.

"Round to, and lower a boat," was the brief command of Granger; "and three or four of the laziest of you get ready to go on shore."

The order was obeyed promptly; the boat was manned, and stepping in, he pointed in the direction he wished to go, and they pulled off. A short row brought them to a rocky inlet on the island, where Captain Granger, with some difficulty, succeeded in landing, and was about walking away, but stopping a moment, he said, in a manner that convinced his men he was in earnest:

"I wish you to remain *here*; and if I see any one trying to dog me, he will get the contents of this pistol, so don't forget."

With this kind advice, he departed, and walking over a little hill, was out of sight, leaving his men not a little surprised at his strange proceeding.

"Steve Granger is up to some mischief, that is certain," said one of the party, known as Bill Rollins, "and I'm bound to know what is in the wind—and I don't believe he will put a ball through me, neither."

So saying, he stepped out of the boat, and was soon

creeping carefully up the hill, behind which the other had disappeared. On gaining the summit, he looked down and saw, but a few rods before him, the captain, busily engaged in scraping out a hole in the sand, evidently for the reception of a small bag that lay by his side.

"So that is what you are up to, Stephen, is it?" said Rollins, to himself. "Well, well, my boy, we will stop that trade of yours. I don't think you will appropriate much more money that belongs to the company. And if I don't fill your berth on board before long, I will wonder. But I had better be creeping back, or I shall be on the way to the devil's headquarters shortly."

Without disturbing Granger, Rollins slipped quietly down the hill and regained the boat, where he had full time to communicate what he had seen before he was joined by the captain, who briefly ordered them to return to their schooner.

* * * *

It is well known that many of the small, uninhabited islands comprising the West India group, for a long time formed the favorite retreat of the buccaneers, who were so long the terror of the seas in that part of the world. There, secure from the eye of man, they would conceal their ill-gotten wealth, and hold their demon-like carousals unseen and uninterrupted. To one of these islands, situated near the southern coast of Cuba, we must follow the little schooner, commanded by Captain Granger. It was a bright moonlight night, that the "*Catch-me-if-you-can*"—(for so Granger's vessel was called)—was standing along under easy sail, close under the western shore of the island before-mentioned, whose surface, overgrown with lofty trees and interwoven with bushes and rank vegetation, presented an unalluring aspect to any save those who wished to hide from the companionship of their fellow-human beings.

For the next half-hour the schooner kept on in her course, gradually approaching nearer the shore, until a deep, narrow arm of the sea appeared, that, at a first glance, would have been mistaken for the mouth of a river.

Into this they steered, and in a few minutes were lost to view from the outside.

The navigation now became intricate, the channel, though deep enough for the accommodation of a much larger craft than Granger's, was so narrow and crooked, that the greatest caution was necessary to prevent accident. And the gigantic trees that grew on the margin seemed to unite their branches, and form an arch through which the little vessel quickly pursued her way.

For something like two miles the voyagers continued to follow the serpentine windings of the channel, that seemed to grow more narrow and crooked as they proceeded, and the dark forest on either side more dense and cheerless, until farther progress seemed impossible from a huge wall of rocks that apparently filled up the channel from side to side. However, the schooner kept boldly on her way, until the jib-boom almost touched the wall, and then a narrow passage-way appeared breaking directly through it, into which they passed, and in a few moments were floating in a broad, still basin, completely hid from the channel on the other side.

A rough voice now hailed them from the rock with the challenge of:

"Who goes there?"

This was answered by showing a light at the foremast-head. The signal appeared to be understood and the "Catch-him-if-you-can" passed up as near as possible to the beach and let go her anchor.

Another and a larger vessel was moored within this natural harbor, whose tall spars, raking fore and aft; the narrow band of white, pierced here and there by a port-hole; the precision with which everything was arranged, would have told an experienced eye she was an armed vessel.

The greater part of her crew appeared to be on shore, seated round a large fire, built in the centre of a large camp that occupied a small clearing on the margin of the basin.

At the noise occasioned by Granger's vessel coming to

anchor, the whole party started up and hastened down to the water. A boat was lowered away, the captain and a few of the men stepped in, and were soon on land, where they were greeted with loud shouts of welcome by their companions.

"Where's the captain?" said Rollins, almost as soon as he set foot on land, to one of the men.

"I saw him go up to the shanty an hour ago; so I guess he has turned in."

"Well, I want to see him, so I guess I will go up there."

So saying, Bill Rollins walked toward the only hut of habitable appearance, and knocked at the door, which was opened by no less a person than our former acquaintance, Ralph Gray, whose face brightened when he recognized the newcomer.

"Ah, Bill, is that you? When did you get in?"

"We just come, Captain Gray."

"Well, I am glad to see you; come in, I want to hear how you made out."

"I have found out that Steve Granger, as you suspected, has been playing us false; the bag of money that was missed he buried on a little island, and I would not wonder if that same little bit of land contained about half the plunder that the whole band has picked up."

"Very like. For Steve has been busy for the last two or three years, but I don't think that he will get hold of much more in the future. We will try what confinement will do for his muscles. You go and send him up here, Rollins, and follow on, with two or three of the boys, and be ready to take charge of him."

Rollins turned to go, but at that moment the door opened, and Granger himself entered.

"Good evening, Captain Granger," said Gray, (as he motioned the other to retire). "I was just about sending for you. What luck this time!"

"I have not heard of anything worth while," he replied, as he seated himself, and turned off a bottle of wine.

"Business is getting dull."

"I think you manage to make it profitable, Captain."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Simply this. That you appropriate the greater part of the spoils to your own use. I wondered what became of all the money for a long time; now I know that it finds place on a small island, where you have, in all probability, a pretty good *bank* started. I have trusted you, Mr. Granger, with large amounts of money, thinking you would act in good faith with the bank; but you have deceived me, sir. So, for the present, I shall give the command of your schooner to some one who has proved more worthy of my confidence, and give you a berth in the cave, where I do not think you will get into mischief. And when you think you can behave yourself, you can come out, and not before."

"Ralph Gray. I give you fair warning, that if you carry your threat into execution, you will regret it to the day of your death. I am not to be trifled with by any means; and I should think one as well acquainted with me as you are, would be aware of that fact. What good would it do to put me in the cave? I should get out, and then you probably know what the consequences would be."

"Do you think I am to be turned aside by such idle words as these, Mr. Granger? I know very well that if you get away, you would be bad enough to betray us. So I shall see to it you do not."

"Truly, it would be a sin of the most *unpardonable* kind to betray a band of pirates, who have committed crimes enough to hang them twice over."

"It is useless to bandy words with you, sir. The fact is, you are a disgrace to the name of pirate, or anything else. I think, take it all around, you are the worst character I ever met with. Bear a hand, boys; take Captain Granger, and give him a berth in the cave; and see to it, Mr. Rollins, that you shut the door when you come away, for he thinks to cut our acquaintance at the first opportunity."

It may, perhaps, be well to state the relationship that existed between Ralph Gray and Stephen Granger. The former, as the reader has probably already conjectured, was the commander of the much dreaded "Sea Vulture," and the business of the latter was to hang about the principal ports to get information of any craft that went to sea with a valuable cargo, and then give notice to the other, who was always sure to cross the path of the unfortunate merchantman.

Granger had been trusted by his master, not only with the command of the little schooner, but with the keeping of a large portion of the spoils accumulated. Unfortunately, however, in addition to the rest of his failings, the passion for wealth stood predominant. Consequently, he had, from time to time, (unobserved, as he thought,) taken large amounts, and buried them on the island, as has been described, intending, as soon as he had a sufficient sum, to break with his friends, and with his ill-gotten gains seek some place, remote as possible from the scenes of his early life, and spend his days in the enjoyment of every pleasure that money could purchase.

But at length, suspicion began to be entertained against him by his master, who, to test the matter, sent out with him Rollins, a man whom he could trust, to see what was going on. The result was the discovery already mentioned.

But Ralph Gray, who was loth to lose one of his bravest men, thought if he confined him awhile, he would be glad to return to his duty, and be ready to act in good faith afterwards.

The quarters to which Granger was conducted was simply a rough chamber in the rock, overhanging the narrow passage way leading to the buccaneer's retreat, and was used by them as a stronghold in which to secrete their wealth. Though a natural cave, they had contrived to enlarge it somewhat, and constructed a staircase that descended from the top; the opening to it could be closed at any time by placing a large stone over it, that fitted so nicely, that it would not be likely to attract the attention,

should the island be visited, in their absence, by any strangers.

No other opening was visible, except on the side next to the water, where the wall had been pierced by a single port-hole, through which protruded the black muzzle of a heavy piece of ordnance, placed there to guard the entrance.

The heavy stone grated into its place, and Granger was alone. After venting his rage in the most bitter terms he was master of, he sat down and began seriously to reflect on his situation. He knew Ralph Grey too well, to fear much for his life, but the disgrace he had been subjected to in the eyes of his companions was most humiliating to his haughty spirit, and he was well aware that though his life was safe, he would be kept a prisoner for an indefinite length of time, if he got out at all. He determined to attempt his escape at all hazards, and immediately began a careful search round the chamber for means to accomplish it. Suddenly the idea of a leap from the port-hole crossed his mind. To stride across the cavern, seize the heavy gun carriage, and drag it back from the opening, was but the work of a moment. He thrust his head through the aperture and looked round; the moon had disappeared behind a mass of dark clouds, and a light rain-storm was pattering against the rocks, rendering the night dark and cheerless, but a favorable one to the projects of the imprisoned buccaneer.

Full thirty feet below him, the canal wended its serpentine way, and it would be necessary to swim quite a distance before a landing could be effected, owing to the rocky nature of the shore. It required no small amount of courage to take a leap like that, in a dark night, without knowing how deep the water might prove, or what was the nature of the channel's bottom. But Granger did not lack courage. So, without stopping a moment to reflect on his rashness, or divest himself of a single article of dress, he sprang from the port-hole, and descended with a heavy plunge into the water, that fortunately proved deeper than appearances indicated. He arose to

the surface unharmed, and immediately struck out and commenced swimming, taking care to keep where the rock cast a broad shadow, that pretty effectually concealed him from view.

After navigating in this way quite as long as was agreeable to his feelings, he succeeded in landing on the tangled bank, where his unexpected presence disturbed the slumbers of a huge alligator, who shied off into the water and disappeared, without causing any regret on Granger's part, who now found himself in a dense forest, surrounded with all manner of poisonous reptiles and beasts of prey, without so much as a knife or pistol for defence. But he did not stop to weigh those matters in his mind; he resolutely pushed his way through the bushes, keeping near the water to prevent getting lost, and occasionally wading along its margin, when a thicket, through which it was impossible to force a path, barred his way.

Bats rushed against his face, and various kinds of birds, scared from their nests, flew screaming about his head. Huge lizards dropped from the branches of the trees in his path, and the viper thrust forth his forked tongue, and glared upon him with his glittering eyes, as he passed near its retreat.

But nothing seemed to intimidate him. He kept boldly on his course, and, after three hours of the most extreme exertion, reached the shore of the ocean.

From a little tuft of bushes he drew a small boat, and unhesitatingly put to sea. The boat had evidently been placed there for an emergency like the present. It contained a calabash of water, some sea-biscuit and a gun. Taking a hasty draught of water, he applied himself to the oars, and the little boat shot over the waves like an arrow.

Three days from that time he was safe on the island of Cuba, steering directly for the city of Havana, that lay on the other side of the island, nearly opposite him. He pursued his way with the same indefatigable energy, worthy of a better purpose.

But good motives had long since ceased to attract the attention or govern the movements of Stephen Granger. His lion-like courage, the quick resolve in time of danger, the patience with which he endured hardships, and surmounted obstacles that beset his path, had they been employed in a proper channel, might have won for him an honorable name in history. As it was, his character presented a fearful example of what man is, when he has thrown off all moral restraint, and given full licence to every unholy passion.

But he had, in part, been a creature of circumstances. Early left an orphan, with none to care for him, no kind friend to fashion his youthful mind in such a way as to fit him for future usefulness, he had easily been led astray, and had passed down the dangerous road that will surely conduct those who follow it to disgrace and death. Among his lawless companions he was brave, daring and blood-thirsty, but so utterly faithless and cruel, that he was despised and avoided, even by them. He accomplished his journey in a surprisingly short time, and on his arrival, at Havana, engaged passage on board a vessel bound to New York, but with not the least intention of going there.

As the vessel would not sail before the expiration of a week, it gave him time to accomplish one part of his plot, and that was the betrayal of Ralph Gray and his associates.

This could not be done without considerable danger to himself; but he trusted to his own ingenuity to get out of any difficulty he might get into. It was quite essential to have a confederate to assist him in carrying out a part of his plans; and his knowledge of human nature enabled him to fix upon the captain of the vessel in which he had engaged passage to New York, as one who would not refuse to perform any service, provided the wages were good and his neck insured.

But the moment had not arrived when he deemed it advisable to begin operations with Captain Brewster, who was intended to be used as a tool in accomplishing his de-

signs—decoy him into the danger to shield himself—and when he could be of no further use, take his life, if necessary, to get rid of him, and thereby insure silence. All these plans Stephen Granger thought over in his mind, and determined upon as coolly as he would in any ordinary business transaction.

So determined was he on revenging himself on Ralph Gray, that every other feeling was subordinate to it. That must be accomplished, let the consequences be what they might.

Fortune seemed disposed to help him on to destruction with all possible speed, by assisting him to accomplish the plans of his designing. As he was walking down the street, after his interview with Captain Brewster, he observed on the other side of the way a person he was confident of having seen before. With a view of satisfying his curiosity on that point, he passed over and soon overtook the other, who proved to be the young Lieutenant who had saved the life of Ethel Gray, a short time before.

The recognition was mutual, but it did not happen to be part of Granger's policy to renew his acquaintance with Ernest Howard at that time. So, without waiting to give the other a chance to speak, he passed on without appearing to notice him; and then suddenly turning around, and retracing, as though returning for something he had forgotten, seemed for the first time to get a fair view of his face. Eying him for a moment with a look of uncertainty, he approached and inquired, in broken English, so mixed up with Spanish, that any one would have supposed the latter his native tongue:

"If he did not belong on board the ship Windsor?"

"Yes, sir," answered Howard, confusedly, "but excuse me, you so much resemble an acquaintance of mine, that I was about addressing you by his name."

"It is strange I should so nearly resemble your friend as to be mistaken for him, but such similarities are often met with."

"That's true! but in your case I can hardly convince

myself you are not the acquaintance I mentioned, but as he was an American, and you appear to be a Spaniard, it is certain you cannot be the same person. So allow me to inquire what is the nature of your business with me."

As the jargon assumed by Granger would be quite unintelligible, we shall take the liberty of translating it into plain English.

After intimating to Lieutenant Howard that he had something important to communicate, the latter invited him to his quarters, and on their arrival, expressed his willingness to attend to what he had to say.

"I believe," said Granger, coolly seating himself, "that the Windsor has been cruising in this vicinity for some time, in search of a famous piratical vessel, known as 'The Sea Vulture.'"

"That is true! and if you have any knowledge of where she is to be found, and feel disposed to make it known, I assure you it will be welcome intelligence, and my government will not fail to reward you in a liberal manner."

"I do not seek or wish reward; the only object I have in making this disclosure, is a desire to benefit the public, in assisting to rid the seas of a lawless freebooter."

"Your object is most praiseworthy, and you can count on my assistance, I assure you. We have been cruising about this six months for this fellow, and not even got so much as a sight of him yet. We only got in here a day or two ago, and Captain Clinton is quite undetermined what course to pursue in future."

"Well, I can tell you what I know about this chap, and how I learned it. Something like six months ago, while on a passage from New Orleans to this place, the vessel I was on board of was pursued by the Sea Vulture. You have probably heard that the captain of the craft seldom trouble the crews unless resistance is attempted, and this fact is so generally known, that very few merchantmen who have the misfortune to fall into his hands attempt any resistance, but let him help himself quietly to whatever he wants. Well, our captain and

crew pursued this course. So, after taking everything of value on board, he went on his way, but compelled me to accompany him, in hopes, as I afterwards found, of inducing me to join his band. This I would not do. So he conducted me to his headquarters, and confined me in a cave, where he keeps his booty, with the pleasant assurance that when I acceded to his terms, I might come out, and not before. But, fortunately, I managed to make my escape."

And he went on to give a brief account of the manner in which he escaped from the pirates, to all of which Howard listened with profound attention, and sat for a long time apparently lost in reflection.

"Where is the headquarters of the gang?" said Howard, at last, looking up to his companions.

"It is on a little island, near the southern coast of this."

"I suppose you would be willing to go with us as pilot, and then you can have a chance to pay off your score with the rascals."

"I should like to do so; but I have just received a letter, stating that my father, who lives in New York, is dangerously sick, and not expected to recover; and wishes me to lose no time in coming home. I could not go without making known to you what I have just stated, and in that way discharge my duty to my fellow-man. But now that is done, and filial duty must commence. But I can give you the exact locality of the island, and you will have no difficulty in finding it."

"Well, I suppose that will answer every purpose, though it would be much better to have a pilot on such a cruise, who is well acquainted with the ground. But won't the fellow be off when he finds you have given him the dodge, for he must know you would betray him, if you ever got where you could."

"That will depend altogether upon how the captain happens to feel about it. He may clear out, or he may stay and defend his camp to the last. Now, my advice is, that you should get three or four of your shipmates, and

Just pay the place a visit; you could use the same boat that I did, which is probably where I left it, on the beach; and then you could pull over to the island, when, under cover of night, you could work your way into the camp; and if they were gone, you would know it, and be on the look-out for them somewhere else; and if they were not, you could get a better idea of the situation of the place than I can give you. And, after all, it would not be a very dangerous undertaking. I have engaged in many a more dangerous one, just for the fun of the thing in my time."

"It might be done, that is true. How long is it since you left there?"

"About a week."

"Well, I will consult with my commander, and if he thinks it best to send out a party to reconnoitre, I will be in for it at all events. I am obliged to you for your information, and will be happy to have your company for supper."

"I thank you, but time presses with me, and I must be off. We may possibly meet again some time, when I am not in quite as much of a hurry. So good-bye, for the present."

"Thus far all goes well," said Granger to himself, as he walked away. "That chap, though, is almost a fool, or he would have seen through my disguise, but I fancy you played your part pretty well, Stephen; you don't usually fail in what you undertake."

With such thoughts coursing through his mind, he arrived at the vessel of Captain Brewster, and was soon engaged in a private conference with the last-named individual.

CHAPTER IV.

The escape of Granger from the cave caused no little stir among his lawless companions, as the reader will readily conjecture. When Rollins, visiting it in the morning, found it empty, he stood for some time utterly confounded. True, the open port-hole showed the manner of the prisoner's exit, but he could not perceive how a person could take a leap like that and escape with a whole neck, and he was also confident that no one but such a reckless character as Granger would attempt it.

However, he concluded he must have sustained serious injury to be able to get any great distance from this camp, and doubted not but that they should find him in the neighborhood, in no condition for running away very fast. He therefore lost no time in advising Ralph Grey of what had happened, and intimated the propriety of a strict search being instantly made.

Gray was as much surprised as his follower, and at once saw the necessity of finding Granger immediately, as there was no knowing what he might do if left at large. Orders were given to search the vicinity thoroughly, and a large party started on the expedition.

The whole day was passed in traversing and re-traversing the forest, but, of course, without success; and at last, wearied with their useless labor, they returned, and reported themselves to their commander, who was by no means satisfied with the turn affairs had taken. The possibility that Granger had escaped with life, and had really found means to quit the island, caused him more uneasiness than he chose to express, even to his confidant, Rollins, who was now summoned in council.

"What do you think now, Rollins?" said Grey, "do you suppose it possible that Granger has left the island?"

"If he was anybody but him, Captain Grey, I should say it was out of the question, but he always would go where no other man could, and if he is off, as I think he is, he will be sure to send us company that we could get along without."

"I know that very well; I know if he has gone, we are betrayed. But how could he get off without one of the boats? and they are all here?"

"If he could not get a boat, he would swim. I tell you, Captain, that when Steve Granger sets out to go anywhere, he *will* go, and all creation can't stop him. Now I am just as sure that he has managed to get the Island of Cuba as if I had been there; and, anyway, we had better be prepared for anything that comes. Nothing like throwing out an anchor to the windward, when a fellow is drifting on a lee shore like this."

"I don't know what we can do, without we cut and run. If he has betrayed us, there is no use in trying to defend this place."

"I suppose that is the surest course; but I don't like the idea of running, very well."

"Better do that than stay here, and get all our necks into the halter. I, for one, would not like a place under a frigate's yard-arm. No! I think the best way is to clear out, bag and baggage, and give this hole a wide berth, until this business blows over. We can leave one or two men to keep watch, and let us know when we can return in safety."

"So be it; and if you wish, I will stay, and let you know what is going on."

"Very well! I would rather have you stay than any other man, for I believe I can trust you. Keep a sharp look-out, but don't let any of those bloody men-of-war's men get hold of you, if they should happen to drop in here while I am gone. I shall be off, then, myself as soon as possible, though I do not see any danger in staying two weeks longer. But I have nothing to do, and may as well be going, and mayhap I shall find game; as for that craft that Steve commanded, I will send her off on a short

cruise over to the main, with Mr. Kendel on the quarter-deck; but as soon as matters get strightened out a little, that will be your berth."

Two hours later, the Black Vulture and its tender were under way, passing slowly down the narrow channel so often referred to, and, in the course of an hour, was standing out to sea, while the island, that so short a time before presented a scene of merry mirth, was now quiet and deserted, with the exception of Bill Rollins, who remained to keep watch in the absence of his master.

* * * *

Scarcely had Stephen Granger withdrawn from the quarters of Lieutenant Howard, when his place was supplied by a man wearing the same uniform as the latter, but evidently some ten years his senior. His face was pale, and to all appearances he had lately recovered from a severe spell of sickness.

"Why Mulgrave, is that you!" exclaimed Howard, starting up and warmly grasping the hand that the other extended to him. "They told me, yesterday, that you would not be out this two weeks, and Captain Clinton has been in a tantrum all day about it."

"It would have been more than two weeks before I got out, if that landlubber Doctor had been allowed to have his own way about it. But I have been cooped up as long as I am going to be, and when the old Windsor sails again, I am with her, sick or well. I believe if I had gone to sea instead of staying here, I should have been about long ago."

The newcomer, who was addressed as Mr. Mulgrave, held the commission of first Lieutenant on board the same craft to which Howard belonged. Some three months before he had been seriously injured by the accidental falling of a spar, and his case taking an unfavorable turn, he was landed at Havana, and placed under the care of a noted physician. Between Mulgrave and Howard there existed a firm, unchanging friendship that had sprung up many years before, and time seemed rather to strengthen the tie that bound the "*brothers in arms*" together.

For the last ten years they had sailed in the same vessel. They had stood side by side amid the thunders of battle, and had, together, faced death in every form. Consequently it was not strange that their friendship should not be of that kind so prevalent at their ages, that is only intended to be short-lived plant, to flourish only while the parties continued in the same position in which they were when it was formed.

This, we are happy to say, is not always the character of friendship now-a-days. Occasionally we find the good, old-fashioned article, that will stick by you through thick and thin, the same when misfortune hung like a dark cloud over you, that it was when you inhabited a lighter atmosphere. Such we prize; but it is getting scarcer, hardly oftener to be met with than angel's visits. Excuse this brief departure from the subject, and we will go on with our yarn.

"I wish," said Howard, after they had seated themselves, "that you had come in a few moments before you did, for I have just had a curious visitor; he had not been gone but a short time when you came in."

"Who was he, pray, and what did he want?"

"As to who he was, you know as well as I do, but his business is easily explained. It was nothing more or less than to tell me where the Black Vulture is to be found."

"Well, that is good news, anyhow. It will make Captain Clinton good-natured a week, if he can only catch that fellow; he has been looking for him so long, without success, that the old man's stock of patience, (that was never large, by the way,) is getting pretty well exhausted. But what kind of looking chap was it that brought this interesting piece of intelligence?"

"That is just the strangest part of the story. You recollect of hearing me speak of a fellow that I saw at St. Augustine, by the name of Granger, (or at least, that was what he called his name,) when I was there a short time ago?"

"Yes! It was the chap that got shipwrecked with his lady love, was it not?"

"The same one. Well! The man that brought me the news about the Black Vulture so nearly resembled Granger that, before I heard him speak, I would have sworn that they were one and the same person."

"And, in all probability, they were. He might have had reasons of his own for not wishing you to recognize him."

"No! that is impossible; for Granger was a Yankee to the backbone, and this one was a Spaniard, who could not jabber English enough to make his story intelligible; if I had not been able to talk Spanish myself, his visit would not have been worth much."

Howard then proceeded to give an exact account of the conversation that had passed between himself and Granger, and ended by asking Mulgrave's opinion about going to reconnoitre the buccaneers' camp.

"Captain Clinton will, of course, decide that matter," answered Mulgrave, "but, according to my notion, it would be a good idea. It would be rather a fool-hardy job to take a vessel into a place like that, of the localities of which you know nothing, except from the say-so of a stranger, who, after all, may only be plotting to decoy us into danger; and if he were not, I should think it best to learn something more than we now know, before we attack them. I don't like this working in the dark. If I can't see my enemy, I want, at least, to know where he is. That is exactly my opinion. But perhaps we might as well go and talk with Captain Clinton about it, for we can't come to any conclusion until we do."

The two officers arose, and, having settled with their landlord, they walked down towards the mole. On reaching it, they stepped into a boat, and were soon on the deck of the Windsor, where their presence caused not a little surprise, as Mulgrave was supposed by all to be yet confined to his bed, and Howard having gone on shore on liberty, they could not conjecture what had brought him back before his leave of absence had expired. Na

time was lost in acquainting Captain Clinton with the information they had obtained. And as Mulgrave had anticipated, the simple fact that he had learned something definite concerning the whereabouts of his wily enemy, put the old weather-beaten officer in the best possible humor.

He concurred with Mulgrave and Howard that it would be a wise precaution to send out a small party to see for the exact situation of the buccaneers' camp, to learn the strength of the force, and to make other observations that would be of essential use in case they concluded to attack them in their present retreat. Howard (by his own request) was appointed to head this expedition, and was permitted to chose his companions.

No sooner was the object of the undertaking made known among the crew, generally, than volunteers for the service stepped forward by the score. He chose but three, however; but they were noted among their fellows for personal bravery, and their skill in executing commissions of a similar kind.

And, with the young Lieutenant for a guide, who was proverbial on board for coolness in the most dangerous expedition, in addition to the rash daring of his character, it was conceded by all hands that all that was possible for man to accomplish would be done.

Thomas Allen, Richard Standish, and Joshua Sampson, (for such were the names of the men who were to accompany Howard,) were instructed to be ready at an early hour the following morning, to start on their adventure. It was arranged that they should provide themselves with horses to convey them to the other side of the island, where, if their informer's story was true, they would find the boat used by him, where he had left it on the beach.

The first grey light of morning found our party not only in the saddle, but some distance from the city, and fairly started on their cruise. They were all furnished with horses, except old Joshua Sampson, who, unable to procure

one, bestrode as contrary a mule as ever refused point blank to comply with the wishes of its master.

Sampson was a regular old salt, and probably, for the past forty years, he had not spent six months on shore, and the awkwardness with which he managed the stubborn beast caused no small amount of merriment among his friends.

"I tell ye what 'tis, Mr. Howard," he said, "of all the hard-steering crafts I ever did see, this critter is the worst by all odds; and if she should happen to get shoved off a point or two, I might as well try to move this ere island, as to get her back again."

"Well, Josh!" replied Howard, laughing; "if you can't keep in our wake, we shall have to get out a line and take your craft in tow."

The course that Howard was pursuing, was a little west of south from the city of Havána. Though the island in that place was quite narrow, it took some time to cross it, owing to the somewhat wild and rugged nature of the country through which they had to pass. On the evening of the second day, however, they came in sight of the Orian; and, after a little trouble, found the boat lying, as Granger had left it, on the sand.

"It is good for one's eyes, maties," said Sampson, as he slipped off his animal, "to get sight of a boat and salt water again; but what in nature folks can want to use such critters as that blasted beast for, is more than I know."

Having delivered himself of this speech, the old sailor turned his attention to getting the boat ready for sea, while the other members of the party went in quest of some place where they could leave their steeds in safety. One was at last found. An old fisherman who lived near by, agreed to take charge of them until their owners should return. This difficulty removed, the voyagers put to sea.

The passage proved rather stormy; but all being experienced seamen, it was accomplished without accident. It was a dark, foggy, unpleasant evening; and after search-

ing for the channel described by Granger, until their patience was pretty well exhausted, they at last found it, and began their silent ascent.

It was no very enviable operation for four men, in an open boat, to sail boldly into a place where they had every reason to expect a band of bloodthirsty desperadoes were lurking, who would not feel disposed to treat visitors with much courtesy.

But little they thought or cared about that. They kept on; and soon the rough, natural fortress loomed suddenly up before them. They rested on their oars for a short time, to ascertain if they were discovered; but all was silent as the chamber of death; so they pulled gently forward, through the narrow passage-way, and, in a few moments, were floating on the still waters of the forest harbor.

A single glance showed them that the "Black Vulture and its Tender" were not there; and as there was no appearance of life within the camp, Howard determined to land and give the place a thorough examination. As this was no very extensive affair, it did not take them long to accomplish it.

"Well, boys," said Howard, as they walked toward the boat after finishing their search, "I fancy these free-thinking gentlemen are all off, and have left us in full possession of their camp, that, to all appearance, can't contain much to pay us for our trouble. They had quite a snug berth here, but rather out of the way, for my taste."

"If we could blunder into that cave which the Spaniard told you about, Mr. Howard, we might find something worth while," said Allen.

"I do not think they would leave much plunder here; for they must have known the Spaniard would betray them. But there is no use staying here any longer; it's as gloomy as a church-yard at midnight; let us be going."

The proceedings of Howard and his party had not been entirely unseen; at least one pair of eyes had watched

them, and one pair of ears had gathered most of their conversation; in other words, Rollins, true to his trust, had kept vigilant watch in the absence of his master. He heard with surprise the young Englishman speak of receiving information concerning their camp from a Spaniard—for, as the reader already knows, Granger was the only person from whom the buccaneers feared betrayal—and the knowledge of a plurality of traitors was anything but agreeable to this silent spy.

He puzzled his brains a long time to think who his new enemy could be, without coming to any satisfactory conclusion—as there were several Spaniards connected with the band.

"I believe the devil has deserted his own followers!" he muttered, as he descended from his post of observation:

"Here is another snake in the grass it seems—one of those Spaniards, I suppose—he will be sure to hunt up Steve Granger, and between them they will plot out our certain destruction. Curse the luck. One thing, they won't get hold of Ralph Grey just yet. I am glad he went away when he did."

While uttering this soliloquy, Rollins was creeping along a narrow shelf in the rock, overhanging the channel, anxious to obtain a nearer view of the departing boat, that was slowly making its way through the narrow passage, and would soon be directly beneath him. In many places the shelf was intersected by jutting points, around which it was impossible to pass, without the assistance of tough bushes that sprung from the crevice in the rock, as if on purpose to aid him in his perilous journey.

But it certainly seemed as if the Fates were in league against the buccaneers—for, while passing one of these points, a bush, on which Rollins had trusted all his weight, came up by the roots, and down comes the man, splash into the water, almost under the bow of Howard's boat.

"What in the name of wonder was that?" said Allen, starting up quickly, and looking intently at the spot

where the fallen man had disappeared, "I'll bet my eyes that it's one of those chaps we have been looking for, and he has taken this tumble while trying to get a look at his visitors. There, he has come up, and is swimming like all creation toward the shore. Ahoy! shipmate, wait a minute and we can give you a better berth than you have got there, and among respectable men into the bargain." In another moment, the boat was alongside of the swimmer, who was quickly hauled aboard, disarmed, and stretched at length on the bottom, when he was politely reminded that he was expected to remain quiet.

"Now, give way with a will, boys!" said Howard, "for I should not wonder much if there were more birds of this fellow's stamp where he comes from."

"If there is, we can accommodate one or two more of them with a berth, by stowing them a little," answered Allen, laughing.

"Yes, fill them up, one right on top of the other, and then we could take a cargo of the rascals," said Standish.

"And they are in pretty good demand at Havana just now," put in Simpson, with a grin. "Suppose you question that chap a little, Mr. Howard, and maybe you can learn where his skipper has gone."

Rollins at first refused to say anything that would give a clue to his master's present whereabouts; but he at length intimated that Ralph Gray had abandoned his camp, because he feared betrayal from one of his men who had deserted, and hinted that he might be found somewhere in the vicinity of St. Augustine.

This was enough for Howard, who rightly conjectured that the buccaneer intended to hang about among the Bahama Islands, and that neighborhood, until he heard some report from his camp; and, as he had the watchman who had been left there, in his own possession, he thought it probable that the first intelligence that reached Captain Grey, in regard to his island, would be conveyed in the Windsor.

The voyage between the two islands was accomplished

as soon as it could have been expected. The party landed in fine spirits; and, finding their horses safe, they paid the old fisherman for his trouble, and prepared to continue their journey—but now a question arose as to how the prisoner should be transported the rest of the way.

"Let him stow himself away astern of me," said Sampson, who was once more seated on his mule, "I guess this long-eared animal can make along with two of us, and maybe she will sail better with more ballast."

Rollins obeyed, and was assisted to his seat; but no sooner did the creature feel the additional weight, than, with a loud snort, she dashed off down a steep declivity, with a velocity that put it entirely out of the rider's power either to check or guide her in the least.

"Hold on to the critter's tail, you bloody thief, or you will be slidin' off for'red," shouted Sampson, who, with his arms round the mule's neck, was endeavoring to prevent a collision between himself and mother earth. But at that moment, as if with the design of getting rid of her load, the creature stopped so suddenly, that both the men shot forward over its head, and remained half-buried in the drifting sand.

The old salt scrambled up and grasped the prisoner firmly, who was about taking advantage of the accident to make his escape, and sung out to his companions:

"Bear a hand here, shipmates, my craft has fetched up, and all hands are overboard."

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Howard, when he reached the scene of disaster, "and what are you doing there in the sand, Sampson?"

"That blasted brute pitched me overboard, and almost broke my neck; and I hope never to see blue water again if I steer her the rest of the way to town, so ye may just lash that bloody pirate onto her deck, and if she capsizes and breaks his neck it won't do any harm; but, as for me, I shall foot it, for I want to get back alive."

Finding that the old sailor was resolute in his determination of walking, in preference to trusting himself on the mule again, Howard gave orders to secure the prisoner to

the saddle, and put him in advance of the others. In this way, they proceeded, occasionally letting Sampson rest himself on one of the horses, and in due time they arrived safe and sound in Havana.

A few hours later, a very unusual stir was observed on board the Windsor, and the order to get under way was distinctly heard by the idlers on the mole. In a moment, the yards were manned, every sail was dropped at the same instant, and sheeted home. The colossal mass begun to move slowly through the water, and, before dark, had disappeared in the distance.

CHAPTER V.

The same day, and nearly the same hour, that the Windsor left the port of Havana, the brig Sea Board, Captain Brewster, was standing under short canvas, near the small sandy island, where, on a former occasion, the reader has seen Stephen Granger, engaged in depositing his money for safe keeping. The last-named individual now walked the deck of the brig in earnest conversation with its commander; and, it was evident, from the glance which the two men took towards that insignificant bit of land, that it was at that moment the subject of their thoughts.

"I suppose you have arrived at some conclusion in regard to my proposal, Captain Brewster," said Granger, addressing his companion. "There is the bank that holds my money, and all that is necessary on your part to secure a pretty little shot in the locker, is to come to an understanding with me about the chartering your craft for a few days. What do you say, man?"

"I don't like the job very well, Mr. Granger, though I ain't over particular what I do if the pay is only right; and I must say, that you offer up what I call handsome--but a man must have some regard for his honor you know."

"Honor! ha, ha, ha—I like to hear a man like you talk about honor. Why, you don't even know what the word means!"

"I know this much, sir, that it ain't a very pret'j piece of work to carry a young woman off against her will."

"How many times have I got to tell you, that there is

no force to be used in the affair? I fancy the girl will be willing enough to take a cruise with me."

"Then you will use some rascally deception—for you told me no longer ago than yesterday that the girl wasn't oversond of you—and if she ain't, all creation couldn't make her marry ye."

"And pray, tell me, what makes you think I wanted to marry her? I thought I told you that the only object I had in carrying her off was to revenge myself on her father, who has given me reason enough to hate him; and hate him I do, and will while he and I live in the same world."

"I know you told me all that, Mr. Granger, but did you think I was fool enough to believe it; young chaps like you don't often clear out with pretty gals to clear off old scores again somebody. If you don't mean to marry her, you are fixin' up some mischief, of that I am certain."

"And what if I am? Whose business is it, I would like to know? "At all events, when I ask your opinion in regard to my affairs, it will be time enough for you to give it; but there is no use in talking longer; you don't want to do the job, and there are plenty that do—so let the matter rest there."

Captain Brewster was not the man to let two thousand dollars slip through his fingers, just because the manuer in which it was to be earned was dishonorable, unmanly and wrong. So, after musing over the subject a moment, he replied:

"Well, I 'spose I might as well lend you a hand, for if I don't, some one else would, and get the cash; but I want you to understand that I never will take a part in another affair of this kind."

"Unless some one offers you two thousand dollars for doing it—which is not likely. Oh! I understand you perfectly, Captain Brewster; you are a very honorable man; but still a little money will make you do anything short of murder; and I guess you could be hired to do that, if it wasn't for an awkward law they have now—a

days, that makes it dangerous for a man to play that game. But now for the gold! Let go the mud-hook, hoist out a boat, and we will be after it.

This was quickly done, the two villains entered the boat, and in a very short time both were standing on the beach.

Stephen Granger had no idea of letting his companion know the exact spot where his hoard was concealed—for he was not ready to remove the whole—and had no very high opinion of Brewster's good faith; so, as on a former occasion, he declined the company of the worthy captain, and pointedly requested him to keep watch in the boat, while he went to remove the deposit. This the other did not like to do; but he had learned enough of his employer's character to convince him that he was not the man with whom it was wise to trifle. So he quietly remained, and Granger passed over the little sand-hill, and was soon out of sight.

Fifteen minutes had hardly elapsed when Granger returned, bringing with him the identical bag that he had placed there but a short time before. This he opened, and displayed to the greedy eyes of Brewster the gold he so much coveted.

Brewster extended his hand to grasp the prog, but was promptly foiled by the other, who remarked, with the utmost coolness, as he cunningly slipped the bag into his pocket:

"I guess I will take charge of this matter for the present; it will be time enough for you to claim your pay when your work is done. I should not like to trust you with it before."

"And what reason have I to believe that you will pay me then, Mr. Granger? It seems to me as though I have as good a right to suspect your fair dealing as you have to distrust mine. I only want things done fair; so, if you will pay half down I will trust to your honor for the other half."

"I do not pretend to have any honor, Captain Brewster! But you will not get a dollar of your pay until the

lady is landed at St. Jago! And I want you to remember that I carry pistols, and those who know me think I am a pretty good shot; and, furthermore, if I see anything squally on your part, I shall lodge a bullet in your head.

"So, if these arrangements are to your mind, we will go on board, and be off."

Captain Brewster had no alternative, but to submit with the best grace he could.

He had gone too far to think of retracting; so he gave a reluctant consent, and the two men returned to the Sea Bird.

CHAPTER VI

We must now turn our attention to Glen's Cottage and its inmates. Something over a year had elapsed since Ralph Grey had visited his family; and, in spite of her efforts to feel easy, Ethel had begun to entertain an ill-defined feeling of alarm for his safety that almost amounted to a presentiment of coming evil. Though there was nothing in the mere fact of his absence to occasion uneasiness, (for he had been away much longer at a time,) but lately she had permitted her mind to dwell on very little circumstances connected with her father's prolonged stay — trifling, it is true, of themselves—yet they formed a chain of reasoning that convinced Ethel that something—she knew not what—was wrong.

She feared that her parent had allowed himself to be engaged in some contraband trade; but, a suspicion of his real business never, for a moment, entered her innocent heart. Her mind was too pure to entertain the thought that it was possible that one to whom she gave the title of father was engaged in actual *piracy*; and daily a prayer went up to the Throne of Grace for the wanderer's safe return to his home, and to the path of virtue, if he had strayed from it.

It was a beautiful afternoon in the early part of autumn, that Ethel Grey sat by an open window that commanded a view of the little cove at the foot of the garden; though apparently occupied in contemplating the scenes before her, she was in reality thinking of her absent father, and wishing she could see his boat, at that moment—as she had seen it many times—pass up the cove, and land at the little pier.

Suddenly, she saw a figure emerging from the bushes.

and walk toward the house. As it approached, she recognized Stephen Granger. A more unwelcome visitor could not, at that instant, present himself, and she was about withdrawing from the window, when he entered the door, that happened to stand open, and stood before her.

"My business must excuse me for again intruding upon you," he began in a sad voice. "I am sorry to say that I am the bearer of very unpleasant news from your father, who is, I fear, by this time"—

"Dead?" interrupted Ethel, starting up, and gazing at the other in affright.

"No; not dead, but past all hope of recovery, I fear. When I left him, his death was daily, almost hourly, expected."

"And now he must be dead. Oh! my father, why could I not have known of this in time to reach you while you yet lived?"

"Calm yourself, Miss Gray, you may yet have time to reach your father's bedside before he breathes his last. I came on purpose to be your escort, and by the special request of your father, who wished, if possible, to see you once more; I have lost no time in coming, and have arranged it in such a way that I shall have no trouble in returning."

Ethel Grey was not the one to linger, when summoned to the death-bed of a parent; but the blow had been so sudden, so unexpected, that, for a time, she was quite unable to collect her scattered senses, or decide on any course of future action. It never occurred to her that Granger might be deceiving her in this matter, though she had not a very high opinion of his honesty, yet she never dreamed that he was bad enough to invent such a story; and the cunning villain saw that she was completely duped by his well-acted sorrow, consequently he had nothing to fear. His plot had worked to his entire satisfaction.

When Ethel recovered in a measure from the first shock that the unexpected intelligence had given her feel-

ings, she sought the sympathy and counsel of Silas Morton.

She found the good old man in his little room with his Bible open before him. He closed the book when she entered, and she at once made him acquainted with the dreadful intelligence she had received.

"I am afraid, Miss Ethel," he said, when he had heard her story, "that Mr. Granger is deceiving us; but for the world I wouldn't hinder you a minute, if I thought Capen Grey was really so sick."

"Mr. Granger could not deceive me on such a subject as this, Silas."

"I hope not, Miss Ethel; but men sometimes do dreadful wicked things when they have not the fear of God before their eyes; for you see, without that, it is man's nature to do just as bad as he can."

"But, Silas, Mr. Granger would be a monster in human shape, if he could wantonly tell me that my father was dying, when there was no truth in it."

"I know it; and I am afraid that he is just that thing you named."

"Well, what can I do? I cannot look into his heart to see if he is sincere; and if my father is really sick and should die, and I refuse to visit him, I should never forgive myself."

"True, child, you can't tell whether he is honest or not; and I don't see any other way, but to go, and trust in God to keep you from danger; and He will do it, if you ask Him in faith. It is just as easy for Him to watch over you on the great ocean, as here in this house. His all-seeing eye looks over all the world at the same time; and His all-powerful hand holds every wicked spirit in check, they can't go beyond the bounds set them."

CHAPTER VII.

Two hours later Ethel bade adieu to the home of her childhood, little thinking she was leaving it for the last time; yet, so it proved. Morton accompanied them as far as St. Augustine on their journey, and saw them safe on board the Sea Bird. He then turned his steps homeward, with a heavy heart, and very gloomy forebodings.

Everything on board the Sea Bird was arranged for a hasty departure; and Captain Brewster, who was well pleased with the quiet aspect of things, lost no time in getting his craft under way. The best state-room that the vessel afforded was appropriated to the use of Miss Gray, where she was left the greater part of the time to herself. Now, when Granger had his victim fairly in his power, he had not the courage to unfold his base designs to the unsuspecting maiden, who had been wiled into his net, but still looked upon him as acting in perfect good faith; never, for a moment, suspecting the deep plot into which she was entangled.

Occasionally, even Granger's seared conscience reproached him with the ruin he was working; but it was a momentary pang, quickly banished from his mind, and he laughed, with a kind of fiendish delight, when he reflected how faithfully he had carried out his plans of revenge.

Twenty four hours after leaving St. Augustine, the Sea Bird was making her way through the group of Bahama Islands.

Though the craft was in a rather out-of-the way place for a merchantman, she was not alone; a strange sail had just been reported from mast head, that was bearing down upon them, with the evident intention of cultivating

their acquaintance ; and Granger, glass in hand, had ascended the main shrouds to ascertain, if possible, who their neighbor might be. A few moments seemed to satisfy his curiosity—for he hastily descended, and, walking aft to where Captain Brewster was standing, said, in a low voice :

" We have a troublesome fellow out yonder, captain ! that craft is no other than the Sea Vulture, which you have probably heard of before ; and I believe a chap of your stamp don't like to fall in with her very well."

" What on earth is to be done, Mr. Granger, unless we can show them a clean pair of heels ? We are done for."

" That's a fact, captain ! and you can rest easy about running away from that fellow ; the craft don't float that can do it."

" Then I shall lose my vessel, my two thousand dollars, and as like as not my life. I wish you had been in Davy Jones' locker before I ever see ye."

" Don't work yourself into a passion, captain, for I think we can get out of the scrape yet. I am well acquainted on this cruising ground, and know every passage perfectly. Now, you see that channel between those two little islands ahead.

" Well, if you can reach that before they overhaul us, we can go through ; and he can't follow us, for he draws full three feet more water than we do ; and before he can turn and stand round on the other side to stop us, we shall get so much the start, that we can reach Havana before he can get within gun-shot ; but it will be a neck or nothing race ; for at the rate he is going now, we shall have to pass within range of his guns. However, it's our only alternative ; let's be at it. I will take the wheel myself."

Every inch of canvas that the brig's yards could spread was now hoisted to the wind. The voyagers had the satisfaction of seeing their speed increase materially, though it was evident that the Vulture was gaining upon them hand over hand.

" I wish you would take the wheel ; I want to step below a minute," said Granger to one of the men.

The man complied, and the other disappeared down the companion-way, and knocked at the door of Ethel's state-room. He was admitted, and, without preamble, began :

"I have bad news for you, Miss Gray! We are chased by a pirate, and I think we shall be overhauled."

Ethel started and turned pale, but said nothing, and the villain went on :

"It is high time that you and I understood each other. In the first place, then, I have deceived you; your father is as well as ever he was, for what I know; and, furthermore, he is the commander of the very craft that is now pursuing us; or in other words, Miss, he is the most notorious free-booter that sails these seas."

"And, Mr. Granger," exclaimed Ethel, indignantly, "do you expect me to believe this after you have confessed that the story of my father's illness was a falsehood—a base, wicked falsehood?"

"Believe or not as you like, ma'am; it's all the same to me; but probably in the course of an hour, Ralph Gray and his men will have possession of this vessel; however, that is nothing here or there; my object in visiting you, is to explain my motive for decoying you away as I have. It was simply this: I was in the employ of your father, and should have been now had he not, through some whim, taken away my vessel, and confined me as though I were a slave."

"An insult is something that I will not take from any man; revenge is my disposition. I love it; and I will follow an enemy to the furthest end of creation to obtain it. Well, by that act, Ralph Gray made me his enemy; and, by way of revenge, I betrayed him. The bloodhounds of the law are already on his track; escape is impossible. But this was not enough; I determined to decoy you away, and leave you in a place of secrecy, and then inform him of what I had done, and have the pleasure of seeing him die on the gibbet, without ever knowing the fate of his only child. I never intended to harm you; my plan was, when your

father was dead, to carry you back to Glen's Cottage, and leave you there unmolested. But that plan is likely to be foiled ; so prepare *to die* ; for the moment Ralph Gray gets possession here, I will take your life in his very presence, and then my revenge will be completed.

" You have time for preparation—*improve it.*"

Granger now turned to leave the cabin; and the victim of his cruel perfidy fell insensible to the floor. He gazed for a moment on the pale but lovely features, and a feeling akin to pity crept into his heart of stone; but it soon gave place to the old passions. He hesitated no longer; and, stepping to the companion-way, was quickly on deck. Scarcely had he taken his place at the wheel, when a jet of smoke puffed from the bow of the Vulture, followed by the heavy booming of the thirty-two pound shot that whistled past them, and fell into the sea, hardly twenty feet to the windward.

" That is a polite way of asking us to lay to, Captain Brewster," said Granger, coolly ; " and, in my opinion, we are in a very bad fix. They are close upon us now, and they understand how to trim a gun."

" So much for having anything to do with a bloody villain. I expected some confounded scrape of this kind. Look out! look out there! blast their eyes, they have fixed us now."

The exclamation was caused by a second shot from the Vulture, followed by a crash of the iron missile through the rigging.

The main mast tottered for a moment, and then fell with a splash in the ocean, leaving the disabled craft to rock about at the mercy of the waves; and in less than half an hour the Black Vulture was alongside, and fast to the Sea Bird.

Notwithstanding the utter folly of the undertaking, Granger, with his usual hardihood, determined to make a desperate resistance; and the crew, roused to courage by his example, flocked round him, determined to defend every inch of plank in the deck at the risk of their lives. They were not kept long in idleness. The buccaneers crowded over the

low bulwark, and the work of carnage began. The crew of the Sea Bird fought with the courage of desperation. The deck ran red with blood and was crowded with the bodies of the dead and dying; but they were overpowered at last, and threw down their arms and plunged into the sea, or stood with stern resignation awaiting their fate. Seeing this, Ralph Gray ordered the men to desist and attend to their own wounded, while he sat down on a gun-carriage, and attempted to bind up a terrible gash in his forehead.

While so engaged, Granger rushed past him and made for the companion-way, shouting:

'Come on, Ralph Gray, if you want to see the winding-up of this game! I have betrayed you, but I am not fully *revenged* yet."

Gray had recognized Granger when he first boarded the vessel, and had made every effort in his power either to capture or kill him; he did not care much which; and now, when he saw him make for the companion-way, the thought flashed across his mind that he intended to blow up the brig.

He sprang forward, and with one bound reached the bottom of the steps, where a glance sufficed to show the after-part Granger had spoken of. On the further side of the cabin lay the inanimate form of his child; before her stood the tiger-hearted fiend, pistol in hand, awaiting his entrance, to finish the tragedy.

"This is the winding-up of the play," he said, with a smile of malignant triumph, as he raised the pistol to his eye and pulled the trigger.

But he was foiled in his last plan of revenge. The pistol had simply flashed, and Ethel was unharmed. With a yell of rage, he dashed the weapon that had deceived him to the floor, and faced his enemy with a look of savage defiance. Gray saw through the whole plot in an instant.

"Now, devil in human shape, it's my turn," he thundered, as he drew a pistol from his belt and glanced along the polished barrel.

The next moment a sharp report rung through the cabin, and Stephen Granger, with a muttered curse on his lips, fell backward, dead.

For a moment Gray bent over the fallen man, and *laughed*, as he marked the expression of his features, now fixed in death.

The same haughty curl was on his lip; the same savage lustre shone in his half-closed eyes, as though the spirit that had hurried him on to desperation still lingered in its earthly abode, loth to abandon a realm where it had so long reigned *supreme sovereign*.

to shoot your old mother given up to misery when nothing
else could be done but quit all of said Position ; nevertheless
and truly I would have nothing to do with any such trial
and now nothing further can I do. I do feel your love has deserved
me much and I have given you my word and I do promise
you will be amply and satisfactorily provided for.

CHAPTER VIII.

The report of the pistol brought Ethel to consciousness. She raised her head, and gazed wildly around the cabin, until her eyes rested on the face of her father. Her first impulse was to spring to his arms and express her delight at this unexpected meeting; but a sudden glance at the prostrate form of Granger, and a recollection of his words, made her pause and bring to mind all that had transpired. That the vessel had been captured by pirates, she could no longer doubt—for she could hear the freebooters ransacking the brig from top to bottom, cursing their ill-luck for having fallen in with such poor game; and that they had been led on by her father was too apparent. She saw that the story of Granger, which a little while before she had indignantly refused to believe, was indeed true; and he was now stretched a lifeless corpse; and the weapon that had caused his death was still smoking in the band of Gray. The evidence was too plain to admit of doubt. Her father was in reality a branded outlaw—a pirate—one for whom armed vessels were searching at that moment. Poor girl, what could she do? What could she say? Her pure mind recoiled with horror from the man to whom she considered herself bound by nature and dearest ties; how could she ever again respect him as a parent? She could love him with a daughter's affection, pray for him with a Christian's faith and fervor, and this she felt was all she could do. She turned away, covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

As for Gray, he was silent; his daughter, whom he had hoped would always remain in ignorance of the life he was leading, now saw him in his true character—conscience, that for years had ceased to upbraid him, was now roused to

action, and painted, in glowing colors, his many deeds of wickedness; pointed back to the time when he could look into his own heart and not shudder; when he could enter the house of God and not feel that the sacred edifice was desecrated by his unholy presence; when he could rest at night without having his dreams disturbed by visions of the just but terrible retribution that awaited him beyond the grave. In a moment *remorse* had taken possession of his hardened soul; and he had turned away to escape the silent, tearful look of agony that rested on the features of the gentle being before him. He felt unworthy to stand in her presence, blood-stained and guilty as he was. With a rapid stride he crossed the cabin, and rushed up the companion-way. As he gained the deck, the report of a heavy gun boomed over the water. He looked around and saw the Windsor, that had just rounded the eastern point of the island, standing down towards them, with her canvas hauled up, and in every respect prepared for action, less than half a mile distant.

His own crew, having seen the Windsor some minutes before, had cast off the grapplings that secured the Vulture to the Sea Bird, and the latter was drifting slowly away, while the former was being rapidly got ready for the coming contest.

As Gray was nowhere to be seen when the two vessels separated, the crew naturally enough concluded that he had fallen in the late skirmish; so the first lieutenant took his place, and had scarcely time to get the men to their respective posts, when the man-of-war ran down and opened her broadside upon them in good earnest.

It was returned with equal spirit by the Vulture batteries, but with less effect, as her guns were much lighter; and, besides, the men missed the able form of their chief, who was wont to encourage them by his presence in the hour of battle.

The combat between the Vulture and the Windsor was short, but it was terrible. One after another of the spars of the former tottered over the side; her hull being perforated by shot like a basket; and one by one of her crew had

fallen, until there was scarcely enough left to make a show of resistance.

But they would not yield, knowing that death was all they could expect at the hands of their enemies. At last a tremendous broadside swept the deck of the few that remained, and the batteries ceased to work.

Seeing this, Captain Clinton ordered the cutter to be hoisted out, and proceed, under the command of Lieutenant Mulgrave, to board the pirates.

The boat had scarcely left the side of the Windsor when a stream of fire rushed from the hatches of the ill-fated pirate, followed by an explosion that filled the air with fragments of timber, that fell in every direction ; and the Black Vulture and her lifeless crew, that had so long been the scourge of the ocean, was no more.

The last act of some poor wretch had been to fire the magazine, choosing to die with their vessel in preference to finishing their lives on the gibbet.

Lieutenant Mulgrave pulled round the place for some time in hopes of picking up some of the unfortunate buccaneers, but to no purpose; so he turned his attention to the Sea Bird, that lay at a little distance, too much injured by her late engagement to proceed on her voyage, until she had, at least, rigged a jury mast.

Ralph Gray, who was still on board, had, of course, interpreted all that had happened; but such a change had come over his feelings, that, from the first moment of the battle, he had not cared a straw what became of himself or his vessel.

He now sat on the bulwark, gazing at the approaching boat, without appearing to think that they could harm him in the least. He was at length aroused from his reverie by the sound of Mulgrave's voice bailing the brig; but even then he did not seem to comprehend what was going on enough to return a rational answer.

"Brig, ahoy!" shouted Mulgrave for the third or fourth time. "What's the matter, man? Have you lost your tongue?"

Gray looked at the speaker stupidly for some minutes, and then answered in the usual manner.

"Ahoy! What brig is that, pray?"

"I do not know."

"Well, who is the commander—do you know that?"

"No one."

"The man must be a fool, or else he's crazy," said Mulgrave to one of the men, "but pull away, boys, and we will go aboard and see what is to pay with him."

In a few minutes the boat had reached the disabled craft, and the men climbed to the deck. Gray was still seated on the bulwark, but did not appear to notice them, or be aware of their presence, in fact, till Mulgrave approached him and laid his hand on his shoulder. He then turned quickly around, and no sooner did the lieutenant see his face than he started back, as though he had seen a spirit from the other world, exclaiming:

"Ralph Mulgrave is that you?"

The sound of the name seemed to rouse Gray to consciousness. He started up, looked at the other a moment, and then answered:

"Yes, I am Ralph Mulgrave; but it is a long time since I was addressed by that name, and still longer since I was worthy of it."

"But do you know me?" continued Mulgrave, stepping forward and fixing a searching glance on the other's face.

"I should have known you among a thousand; you are my brother Reginald's son, and very closely resemble him, too."

"Well, sir, there is another question that I wish to ask you, and that is"—

"What I have done with your sister, I suppose?" said Gray, for so we shall continue to call him, interrupting the other.

Mulgrave nodded assent, and Gray continued:

"Your sister, sir, is on board this vessel, alive and unharmed; and she is one that you or any other man will be proud to call sister."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mulgrave, fervently, "that my sister, my long-lost sister Ethel, still lives; but let me see her, sir; let me see her, for I can hardly realize it is true."

"Come with me, then; but let us go alone; we want no company."

"Be it so," said Mulgrave, as he motioned the men to remain on deck; and then, with a trembling step, followed Ralph Gray to the cabin, where the latter left Ethel a short time before.

But Ethel was not there; and the only thing that met their gaze was the ghastly corpse of Stephen Granger, lying where he had fallen.

Gray shuddered as he passed it, but went along and said nothing.

He walked across the cabin, opened a state-room door, and there was the object of their search, seated before a table, her face buried in her hands, and weeping as though her heart would break.

"Ethel," said Gray, in a deep, mournful voice.

Ethel raised her head and looked at him, but did not speak.

Mulgrave could restrain his feelings no longer. He sprung forward and clasped her in his arms, exclaiming:

"It is, indeed, my sister! Thank God, she is found at last!"

Ethel was bewildered. She released herself from her brother's arms, and looked at him in astonishment, and then toward Gray, who again addressed her:

"Ethel," said he, "this is in reality your brother; but you are not, as you suppose, the child of a base, wicked outlaw, but the daughter of an honorable man; one whom you can love and reverence. How you came to be in my possession, and why, your brother will explain. I have loved you as well as if you had been my own child; and that has been the only thing that has prevented me from finishing my life of wickedness, by my own hand, long ago."

"May you be happy in your new home, and forget that such as I ever lived."

Mulgrave listened to this speech without comprehending it in the least; but his noble heart was touched by the mournful voice and melancholy moan of Gray, as he turned to leave him.

"Stop, Uncle," he said, stepping forward, "this is no time to remember old injuries; and I freely forgive and forget any and all you may have done my family. We are all apt to do things at times that we are sorry for afterwards.

"But you know the good book tells us to forgive, if we wish to be forgiven; and I, for one, am always ready to do it—so, there's my hand."

"Mr. Mulgrave," said Gray, slowly, and without taking the extended hand, "there is no use in deceiving you, for you would soon find out the truth, if I did not tell it. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the generous forgiveness you have extended to me; and I would give worlds, did I possess them, if, by so doing, I could accept it.

"But you know not to whom you offer pardon. I am not, as you suppose, the captain of this craft, but I was the commander of the Black Vulture that disappeared out yonder a little time ago. Yes, sir, Ralph Gray, the pirate, and Ralph Mulgrave, your father's brother, is one and the same person. But your sister, sir, has always lived in ignorance of the life I was leading, till, sad to say, she happened to be on board this vessel, when she came to know it.

"One thing more. I know that my life is forfeited, and that it is your duty, after hearing what you have, to convey me in irons to your vessel, and the gibbet would be the finale. But I cannot—will not die thus. I will make my grave in the ocean—farewell!"

And, before the others well understood his meaning, Grey had dashed from the cabin, and was on deck. It was now dark, and, for a moment, he stood watching the

waves as they chased each other by, in a state of mind bordering on desperation.

He hesitated for an instant, but looked up and muttered to himself, "there is but one way—one alternative," and then walked aft, with a hurried stride. A moment after, a heavy plunge told Mulgrave, who had followed him, that his uncle had finished his wretched existence by *suicide*.

A boat was quickly manned, and put off in search of him; but, after some hours' fruitless labor, they returned and reported the probable fact, that the buccaneer chief slept with his followers, beneath the blue waves of the ocean.

CHAPTER IX.

With a sad heart Lieutenant Mulgrave returned to the cabin, and acquainted his sister with what had happened, and at once proposed that they should remove from the brig to the Windsor, until the former could be in a measure repaired, and be got in readiness to continue her voyage.

Ethel was quite ready to comply with the proposition; for, so long as she remained on board the brig, the remembrance of the awful end of the man who had deceived her, as well as the self-destruction of him to whom she had been wont to render the obedience and respect due a father, was brought with two-fold force to her mind. Consequently, it was with a feeling of relief that she stepped into the boat, and bade adieu to the vessel in which she had witnessed scenes that few born in her position are ever called to be spectators of.

Captain Clinton had received intimation of what had transpired on board the Sea Bird, and stood ready to welcome the sister of his first officer. With that polite attention, so characteristic of the man, he had ordered a state-room to be vacated for her accommodation, and every effort in his power to render her situation as pleasant as possible.

After seeing his sister safe to her apartment, Lieutenant Mulgrave went on deck to attend to his various duties. He was almost immediately joined by Ernest Howard, who drew him a little apart from the others, and said, in a voice that betrayed not a little excitement:

"Is it possible that the lady who came on board with you is your sister?"

"Yes; but why do you ask?"

"Because it is the identical person whose life I saved at St. Augustine."

"Is that a fact? Are you quite sure you are not mistaken?"

"Mistaken! Do you think I would be apt to forget her in so short a time?"

"No, I do not think you would; but it is strange that you should happen to fall in with her as you did; and stranger still that I should have happened to come across her just now."

"The fact is, Mr. Mulgrave, this has been an odd affair from beginning to end. Little I thought when I was paddling ashore with her, that I had your sister in keeping; and little I thought, when I went to reconnoitre the island down yonder, that your uncle was the chap we were in search of. But there is one thing that I can't understand, and that is, how the lady came to be on board that craft."

"The story is somewhat long; but come to my state-room, in about an hour and I will tell it to you; and then I must present you to my sister, who will be most happy, no doubt, to recognize in the person who saved her life, her brother's best friend."

* * * * *

Early next morning, the Windsor dropped down near the Sea Bird, and sent a detachment of her crew on board to assist the disabled craft in getting up and rigging a jury-mast.

Though many of the crew of the latter had fallen during her engagement with the Vulture, still more remained than was at first supposed, as many of those that had fallen were found to be yet living, though badly wounded; but some, at the beginning of the battle, had concealed themselves in different parts of the vessel, and had escaped unharmed.

They now came out and assisted their wounded companions with the best medical aid in their power, so

that by the time the man-of-war's men came on board, the brig presented a far different appearance to what it did the night before.

The wounded were all placed in their respective berths; and, considering their circumstances, were quite comfortable.

Captain Brewster, Stephen Granger, and five of the crew were really dead; and, agreeably to custom, their bodies were placed in a hammock cloth, with a weight attached, and at noon they were all committed to the deep.

It was a melancholy sight, to see seven men, in the prime of manhood, go to their last long home at the same time; and it impressed all who witnessed it with the truth of the saying, that when we least expect him, death is near, even at the door.

As there was not enough of the crew of the Sea Bird left to manage her, Captain Clinton sent some of his own men on board, under the command of Lieutenant Mulgrave, who was directed to carry the craft to Havana, and remain there until the Windsor followed him.

This, Mulgrave was quite willing to do, for two reasons:

First, he well knew that a residence on board a man-of-war could not be pleasant to Ethel; and second, his health, which was not fully recovered when he left Havana, was now rapidly declining in consequence of his late rash exposure. So he deemed it advisable to place himself again under the care of the physician who had attended him before.

The poor health of his officer was in fact the reason that had induced Captain Clinton to send him back with the vessel, though he disliked very much to have to send him away.

He saw that he would be much more likely to recover, if entirely removed from his duties on ship-board; so the kind-hearted commander cheerfully dispensed with his services for the time being.

When all was ready, the Sea Bird immediately got under way, while the Windsor remained to watch for the Vulture's Tender that, according to Rollins' story, would be in the vicinity of St. Augustine, or the Bahama Islands before long.

We must now leave the latter in her present situation, and accompany the Sea Bird on her voyage to Havana.

Lieutenant Mulgrave took the first favorable opportunity that presented itself to explain to his sister the mystery connected with the early part of her life, that may as well be inserted here, or, at least, a brief sketch of it.

CHAPTER X.

Ralph Gray, (alias Mulgrave,) and his brother Reginald, who was some fifteen years his senior, were the only children of a wealthy merchant, residing in London. From the cradle, there had been a vast difference in the character of the two. Ralph, at an early age, evinced a strong disposition for the society of the gambler and the debauchee.

It was in vain that his father pointed out the results of such a course; and even threatened to disinherit him. He went on his own way, and at the death of his father, (an event that was undoubtedly hastened by the knowledge of his son's dissolute life,) found himself in the possession of a handsome property, in ready money, and with no one to restrain him in the least.

He at once plunged into all kinds of dissipation, and in ten years his entire fortune had disappeared at the card table; and debts of honor, as he called them, were standing against him to the amount of some two thousand dollars. What was now to be done? If these debts were removed, he might have a turn of fortune, and win back all he had lost.

He went to his brother and acquainted him with his situation, and asked his assistance, promising to abstain in future from gambling in every form. Reginald, who was the exact opposite of his brother, rejoiced that Ralph was at last forced to break with his low associates. He at once paid the demands against him, thinking he would fulfil his promise. But he was disappointed. No sooner did Ralph find himself free from debt, than he returned to his old habits, and worse in fact—for he now felt that it

would be useless to apply to his brother after deceiving him as he had—but money he must have at some rate; so, after thinking over various expedients, he at last hit on one that he fancied would answer his purpose. He forged his brother's name to an order for the amount he wished, and presented it at the bank, where the latter had considerable funds on deposit. The forgery was skilfully executed, and was accepted without question, but no sooner had Ralph left the bank, when the teller, who had paid him the money, happened to take up the orders again, and was struck with the somewhat labored appearance of the signature. This roused his suspicion; so he immediately opened his desk, and took out an order that had been written by Reginald Mulgrave in his presence, and compared them. The result was, that he was satisfied in his own mind that the paper was forged; but, to remove all doubts, he put on his hat, and was soon at the door of Mr. Mulgrave's house; and, at his request, was shown into the gentleman's private apartment.

"Is that order all right, sir?" said the teller, handing him the paper.

"No, sir, it is a forgery," said Reginald, promptly.
"Who presented it?"

"Your brother."

"My brother! What, Ralph! No, it can't be; you are mistaken."

"Not in the least, sir; I know your brother well; it is not an hour since he presented it in person."

"My God! has it come to this? But, stay, I will acknowledge it; I can't see my brother disgraced, while it is in my power to present it."

"You forget, sir, that this is a criminal affair, and that it is my duty to see that the offender is effectually prevented from doing further mischief. It is probable that you would not be the only one that would suffer, if this man was left at large."

"I will be surety for him, sir. I will promise that when he finds what a narrow escape he has had, he will be willing to take warning by it."

It is no use, Mr. Mulgrave. I would be glad to do as you wish, but those who break the laws must learn that there is a penalty affixed to them. If all offenders were spared on their friends' account, what would be the state of things in a little time? I am sorry for you, sir, but I know my duty and must do it. Good morning."

"Stop! stop! I wish to speak a word with you," exclaimed Reginald, as the man turned to leave the room.

But he, not wishing to continue the conference, hurried out of the house, and walked rapidly to the bank.

A few hours after, Ralph Mulgrave was lodged in prison awaiting his trial.

The officers of justice found him at the card table, where he had already staked and lost the greater part of the money obtained by the forged order.

It would be useless to detail the particulars of the trial. Suffice it to say, that he was tried, found guilty, and condemned to die.

Reginald made every effort in his power to save him; but no pardon could be obtained.

The known reckless character that Ralph had sustained for many years went against him, and now the respectability of his connection counted nothing. His fate was fixed, and his brother gave up in despair.

But his career was not to close here. By some means that was never known, he managed to make his escape from prison; fled from England; and from that time nothing was heard of him, or any clue of his whereabouts obtained, until he was seen and recognized by his nephew, on board the brig Sea Bird.

All that is known of his adventures, after he escaped prison, until he purchased the place called by him Glen's Cottage, was learned from a letter written by himself, and addressed to Ethel, in which he gave a brief account of his wanderings, but did not mention the means he had employed in escaping from prison.

It appeared from his statement that he believed, when first arrested, that if his brother had acknowledged the

forged paper, he would have been safe; and, notwithstanding the effort that he made to save him, he never could relinquish the idea.

So, after he escaped from confinement, he lurked about in London a day or two, thinking of some way whereby he could revenge himself on his brother-in-law for bringing him, as he supposed, into his present situation.

One evening, while he was walking in the vicinity of his brother's house, he saw Ethel, then a child of two years old, lying in a cradle before one of the long windows that happened to be standing open. In a moment, the idea crossed his mind to obtain possession of the child, and fly with it from England. The next instant he had climbed over the fence, and stood within the apartment. He quickly collected what few articles of the child's wardrobe that were in sight, took the sleeping infant in his arms, and was about retreating in the same way that he came, when he recollects that he was destitute of money; so he quickly entered the next room, which he knew was his brother's apartment, and from the desk took about two hundred dollars.

With this he made his escape, unseen, from the house, and gained the street.

At the shop of a Jew, who lived near by—one who never recognized a person, by the way, when it would be unpleasant for them to be recognized—he made a full change in his dress, and then proceeded on board a vessel that was lying in the river, bound to the West Indies, and engaged passage, giving his name as Ralph Gray. Before morning the vessel sailed, and the forger was safe—at least for the present.

When he arrived at the West Indies, it was necessary to look about for something to do; but he had no knowledge of business matters, and was entirely unacquainted with any useful calling; consequently, it was not strange that he should again seek such companions as he had been wont to associate with.

A band of kindred spirits was soon found; and, for a year or more he lived as he could. In the meantime, his

companions formed the plan of fitting out a piratical vessel, and the command was offered to him. He accepted it; and he at once set forth to find some place where he could leave the stolen child in safety.

It was a singular thing for a criminal, flying for his life, to burthen himself with a helpless child; but it was not the only strange thing that he did. His whole life, in fact, seemed made up of the most eccentric actions. In the first place, it was strange that one born in the position that he was, surrounded with all the advantages of wealth, society and education, could find pleasure in the companionship of the most despicable of all the human family (we mean the wretched beings found in the fashionable drinking saloons and gambling houses,) but such was the case, and in all probability his after career was all owing to this propensity.

But, to do him the justice, he wished Ethel to grow up as remote as possible from the evil influence attendant on the life he chose to follow, and for that reason he purchased Glen's College, and engaged the worthy, God fearing Morton for his steward.

When the child began to take an interest in reading, he furnished her with books—the tendency of which would be to refine and elevate her mind; and, in short, gave her every opportunity for improvement that the place afforded; carefully guarding against any accident which would lead her even to suspect that he was engaged in anything but a lawful calling.

CHAPTER XL

When the Sea Bird arrived at Havana, Reginald Mungrove lost no time in obtaining suitable quarters for his sister, where she could remain until an opportunity offered for returning to England; and Ethel, unwilling to leave her friends at Glen's Cottage in ignorance of her fate, wrote to Silas Morton, and gave him a brief account of what had happened since she left him.

Two months passed away, and nothing was heard from her old friend, and she began to think that her letter had never reached him.

One evening, as she was sitting alone in her parlor, a servant entered and informed her that there was an old man at the door who wished to speak with her.

"An old man," said Ethel, standing up. "It must be Silas Morton. Admit him, Ann, and then retire until you are called for."

The girl departed, and in a few moments Ethel heard a well known step. The door opened, and the good old man stood before her.

"God bless you!" he said, as he advanced to meet her. "I began to think that I never should find you again. I have searched this town from one end to the other, and was just on the point of givin' up when I got a glimpse of ye through the window."

"Then you got my letter," said Ethel, interrupting him.

"No, Miss, I never got any letter from you; but I got one from Captain Gray that explained all that had happened."

"A letter from Captain Gray? Why, Silas, you have

been deceived, for he is no longer in the land of the living."

"No, Miss Ethel, I am not deceived; for I saw him less than an hour ago; but his v'yge is about over, poor man; I had no idee, when I first seed him, that he would last as long as he has."

"What story is this that you are telling, Silas? Do you mean to say that he is really alive yet?"

"Yes, Capten Gray is really alive; but he won't be long, as I said before; howsomever, I may as well explain, so that you may understand it. You see, most two months ago I got a letter from him, tellin' me all about his wicked life, and what a rough v'yge you had made; and he asked me to come to him, for he was alone and very sick. I obliged him, Miss Ethel, for I thought it hard for a poor critter to die alone, particularly one with such a conscience as he had to keep him company. Well, I found him without much difficulty, and he told me how he had managed to make his escape. You know when he jumped overboard he was kind o' distracted like, and meant to drown himself; but he happened to get entangled in some riggin', and t'en he had a chance to think a bit; and he made up his mind that he had sins enough to repent of already without committin' one that he never could repent of; so, while they are hurryin' about and pullin' off after him in the boat, he swam to the vessel, and managed to crawl on board; but he was afraid to show himself, so he hid somewrere among the rubbish; and, in reality, came here in the same craft that you did. When they arrived at this port he succeeded in gettin' ashore, without bein' seen, and make his way to the house of one of his old friends; but they heard of his mishap very soon, and as he wasn't rich then, they left him to take care of himself."

"Stop, Silas!" exclaimed Ethel, starting to her feet, "I must visit him immediately. Do not wait a moment, or it may be too late. I would that I had known it before, and I would have taken care of him gladly, with all his

faults; he has been kind and good to me. Poor man, how he must feel to be dying and alone; but, thank God, he did not die by his own hand."

"Truly, we should thank God for that," said the old seaman solemnly; "but let us go now, I have a craft here, and we will go right aboard, if you will."

"I will be with you in a moment. Annette." (The girl appeared in answer to the summons.) "Tell my brother, when he comes in, that I have gone out, and shall not be back till quite late; but he need not be anxious, for Mr. Morton will be with me."

The girl bowed and withdrew, wondering where her mistress could be going at that time of night with an old sailor; but she kept her thoughts to herself, and took a station at the window where he could observe the direction taken by their carriage.

A short ride brought Ethel and Morton to a small, comfortless-looking mansion, in an obscure part of the city, where they stopped, and in a few moments they were standing beside the death-bed of Ralph Gray. There was no one in the room except a negro woman, who was striving to alleviate the sufferings of the dying man in the best manner she could; but everything gave evidence that the habitation was the abode of poverty and crime. Gray raised his eyes as they entered, and a faint smile lighted up his pale features as he recognized Ethel, who with a trembling step and an almost bursting heart, bent over him with the affectionate solicitude of a daughter.

What a change a few short weeks had made in that form of almost gigantic mould. The once strong arm now lay powerless by his side.

The once flashing eyes were now sunken, and rolled wildly in their sockets. The dark locks that shaded his broad forehead were damp with the dew of death. The stream of life was rapidly approaching the abyss, down which it will plunge, and be forever lost to the gaze of all mortals.

"This is a kindness I do not deserve," said Gray, in a hollow whisper. "I feel, Ethel, that I am already launch-

ed on the ocean of eternity, and earth is fast disappearing below the horizon. Could the soul but be annihilated with the body I could face death—but that future. How can I meet a just God, whose laws I have so long placed at defiance? I cannot, dare not; yet I must; no escape, no hope, but to pass eternity among devils and lost spirits."

"Oh! do not talk so, unless you would break my heart," said Ethel, in a voice half-choked with tears; "but remember that He against whom you have sinned stands ready to blot out every sin, and never turns away from the dying sinner. With your last breath seek a reconciliation with your God, who is able and willing to save."

"Amen," said Morton, fervently.

Gray did not answer. His breath became slow and labored. He pressed the hand of Ethel. His lips moved for a moment. The clock tolled the hour of midnight; and, as the sound of the last stroke died away, he ceased to breathe. **We seek not to lift the veil that hides the future.**

CHAPTER XL

For a short time Ethel remained silent in the chamber of death, reflecting on the strange drama in which she had played so conspicuous a part, and had just witnessed the closing scene. Her musings were at length broken by Morton, who said, as he brushed away a tear with his rough hand :

" Well, he's gone, poor man ; and I ain't sorry I was here to take care of him. It's hard to die alone, Miss Ethel ; but you must go home now ; I will make all the arrangements for his buryin'."

When Ethel arrived at home, she saw Ernest Howard with her brother—(the former having come in the Windsor that evening)—and both were awaiting her coming, with not a little anxiety, as neither of them knew what had called her away.

Judge of their surprise, when they learned that she had just returned from the death-bed of Ralph Gray, who was supposed by them to have perished, by his own act, two months before.

Of course, under the existing circumstances, Mulgrave wished the last rites for his uncle to be performed as privately as possible ; so, on the following evening, accompanied by his sister and Howard, he repaired to a secluded spot, where the lone tomb of the buccaneer had been made by the hand of Morton. With uncovered heads, the party stood beside the open grave, while the old sailor, in a low, but distinct voice, read the church service for the burial of the dead. It was an impressive scene. The moon had just risen in the East, and was casting its pale light over the little group, while the gentle evening breeze disturbed the thin grey locks of the aged man, who, with

up-turned eyes, addressed a fervent prayer to the Supreme Being in whom he trusted.

The prayer was finished. The negroes, who had borne the corpse to its final resting-place, filled up the humble sepulchre, and with slow steps the few mourners turned away.

Once more, and only once, Ethel visited that grave—and that was on the day before she left Havana. Silas Morton, in the honest simplicity of his heart, had placed a rough stone over the tomb, on which was traced, in rude characters, these simple words:

IN MEMORY

RALPH MULGRAVE.

While the Windsor remained in Havana, Ernest Howard was a constant and welcome visitor at the residence of Ethel; and Mulgrave soon saw with pleasure that something more than a mutual friendship existed between them. He had found his sister possessed of all that delicate sentiment that makes woman lovable, combined with a faultless person and well-cultivated mind. And he knew his friend to be all that was noble and generous in mind; in short, he fancied they were just suited for each other.

When alone with his sister, he was wont to dwell on the many gallant deeds of his young companion; and the rosy blush that mantled Ethel's sweet face told him that she was not an indifferent listener to the well-merited praise bestowed on the man to whom she had given her first girlish love.

Winter passed rapidly and pleasantly away, without an opportunity offering for Ethel to return to the home from which she had so long been absent. When spring returned, Reginald Mulgrave, whose health still continued to decline, resolved to leave the service, and start for England as soon as possible.

A passage was at last engaged in a vessel bound to London. And one fine morning, our heroine accompanied by her brother and Silas Morton, (for Mulgrave had resolved never to lose sight of the worthy old sailor) started on the homeward voyage.

The journey proved a pleasant one, and in due time they arrived at their destination in safety, where the meeting between father and child can be better imagined than described.

There was but one circumstance that tended to alloy old Mr. Mulgrave's cup of happiness, and that was a knowledge of the dreadful career of his brother. Though he had long suspected that he, if living, was leading all but an honorable life, yet he had never dreamed that he had gone so far.

Silas Morton was never permitted to leave the house of the Mulgraves. The few remaining years of his life were passed amid ease and plenty; and when death called for him, he was ready to depart. It was Ethel who watched over her earliest friend in his last sickness. It was her hand that closed his eyes; and it was through her means that a costly monument marked his resting-place.

THE END.

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A national song,
Annie Laurie, [a year,
Answer to a thousand
Answer to K. Kearney,
A thousand a year,
Belle Brandon,
Bob Bolt, [went,
Blind orphan boy's la-
Bob Ridley,
Bold Privateer,
Don't be angry, mother
Do they miss me,
Down the river,
E pluribus unum.
Evening star,
Faded flowers,
Gentle Annie,
Gentle Jennie Gray,
Glad to get home,
Hard times, [sister]
Have you seen my
Heather dale,
Hills of New England,
Home again,
I am not angry,
I want to go home,
Kate Kearney,
Kiss me quick and go,
Kitty Clyde,
My home in Kentuck,
My own native land,
Nelly Gray,
Nelly was a lady,
Old dog Tray,
Our Mary Ann,
Over the mountain,
Poor Juney,
Poor old slave,
Red, white and blue,
Row, row,
Shells of the ocean,
Song of the sexton,
Star-spangled banner,
Sword of Bunker Hill,
The age of progress,
The dying California,
The lake-side shore,
The little blacksmith,
The Marseilles hymn,
The miller of the Dee,
The old farm-house,
The old folks we loved,
The old play ground,
The rock of liberty,
The tax pest,
Twenty years ago,
Twinkling stars,
Uncle Sam's farm,
Unfurl the banner,
Wait for the wagon,
Willie, we've missed,
Willie'll roam no more

No. 2.

Alice Grey,
America,
Banks of the Mohawk,
Be kind to each other,
Billy Grimes, the rover
Bryan O'Lynn,
Come, sit these down,
Core Lee,

Crazy Jane,
Darling Nelly Moore,
Darling old stick,
Good news from home,
Good-night,
Graves of a household,
Home, sweet home,
I have no mother now,
I miss thee so, [sorrow,
I'm leaving thee in
I shouldn't like to tell,
I wander'd by the brook
Kathleen, mavourne'n,
Katy, darling,
Little Katy,
Mabel Clare,
Mary Aileen,
Mary of the wild moor
Mill May,
Minnie, dear,
Minnie Moore,
Mr. Finagan,
My eye and B. Martin,
My grandma's advice,
My love is a sailleur,
My mother dear,
My mother's Bible,
Nancy Bell,
New England,
Oh, I'm going home,
Oh, the sea, the sea,
Old siding hill,
Our boyhood days,
Our father-land,
Peter Gray,
Rory O'More,
Somebody's waiting,
The farmer sat,
The farmer's boy,
The fireman's victory,
The grave of Lilly Dale
The Irishman's shanty,
The old folks are gone,
The post-boy's song,
The quilting party,
Three bells, [heart is,
Tis home where the
Waiting for the May,
We stand here united
What is some wisnow,
What other name,
Widow Macree,
Willie's on the sea,
Winter.

No. 3.

Annie, dear, good-by
Answer to Jeannette,
A sailor's life for me,
Bessie was a bride,
Bonny Jean,
Comic Katee darling,
Comic Parody,
Darling Jenny Bell,
Darling Rosabel,
Ettie May,
Few days,
Give 'you string
Go it while young,
Hail Columbia,
Happy Hezekiah,
I'd choose to be a daisy,
I've something sweet,
late of beauty,
I think of old Ireland,
Jeannette and Jeannot

John Jones,
Jordan is a hard road,
Kitty, kimo,
Lager beer song,
Lather and shave,
Lillie Bell,
Linda has departed,
Man the life-boat,
My dear old mother,
My girl with a calico,
My heart's in Ireland,
My poor dog Tray,
Old dog Tray, No. 2,
Old Rosin, the bean,
Over the left,
Parody on To the West
Pop goes the weasel,
Pretty Jane,
Rosa Lee,
Song of the locomotive,
Sparkling Sarah Jane,
Ten o'clock,
The American boy,
The American girl,
The boys of Kilkenny,
The death of Annie,
The emigrant's farew'l,
The fine old Dutchman
The old English gent,
The old Irish Gent.,
The fireman's boy,
The fireman's death,
The girl I left behind,
The digger's lament,
The Indian hunter,
The old oaken bucket,
The old whisky jug,
The other side of Jordan
The pirate's serenade,
The yellow Texas rose,
Tilda Horn,
To the West,
True blue is the color,
Uncle Ned,
Unhappy Jeremiah,
Villikins and his Dinah
We miss thee at home,
What will Grundy say
Woodman, spare tree,
Yellow Texas rose.

No. 4.

A merry gipsy girl,
Answer to K. Darling,
A national song,
Ben Fisher and wife,
Bonnie Jamie,
Broken-hearted Tom,
By the sad sea waves,
Columbia rules the sea,
Come, gang wi' me,
Commerce, darkies,
Cottage by the sea,
Daylight is on the sea,
Don't cry so, Norah,
Erin is my home,
Gal from the South,
Get out wilderness,
Harp of Tara's halls,
He led her to the altar
Home, sweet home,
I am a freeman,
I'll hang my harp,
I'm not myself at all,
Indian hunter,
Indian warrior's grave.

I've been roaming,
I wish he would decide
Jane Monroe,
Johnny is a soldier,
Jolly Jack, the rover,
Kate was once a girl,
Kitty Tyrrel, [mother],
Let me kiss him for me,
Linda's gone to Bala,
Maud Agair and I
Molly Bawn,
My ain fireside.
My boyhood's home,
Nerah, of Klidare,
Oh, kiss, but never tell,
Old Uncle Edvard,
Paddy on the canal,
Parody on Uncle Sam,
Poor old maidie,
Preserve the mariner
Ship, ahoy,
Somebody's courting,
Song of Blanche Alpine,
Song of the Farmer,
Sparkling Sunday night,
Sprig of shillelagh,
Stand by the flag,
Terry O'Reilly,
The engineer's song,
The farmer's boy,
The hazel dell,
The little low room,
The low-backed car,
The old brown cow,
The old kirk-yard,
They don't wish me,
Tom Brown,
Uncle Gabriel,
Uncle Tim, the toper,
We are fond of kissing,
We are growing old,
We were boys together,
Winnin' mile of Edzine,
Would I were a boy,
Would I were a girl,
Would I were wi' thee.

No. 5.

A dollar or two,
A man's a man,
Angel's whisper,
Auld lang syne,
A Yank ship and crew,
Bashful young man,
Call me pet names,
Camptown races,
Charity,
Cheer, boys, cheer,
Comin' thro' the rye,
Days I was hard up,
Dermot Astore,
Dilla Burn,
Down the barn, Davy
Dumbarton's dell,
Ever of thee,
Gently o'er me stealing
Grave of Bonaparte,
Grave of Uncle Tom,
Gum-tree canoe,
Hark, I hear an angel
I offer thee this hand,
Irish emigrant lament,
John Anderson,
Johnny's a shoemaker,
Kind relations,
Last week I took with

CONTENTS SONG BOOK No. 30.

A major in the ninth,
As she went passing by,
A young girl of the day,
Beautiful Emeline,
Billy Larkin,
Billy's request,
Boo-leep,
Building on the sand,
Call me when ready,
Carry the news to Mary
Daisy Lee,
Dare-devil Dick,
Don't sell father rum,
Good-evening,

Happy little violets,
If dad were only rich,
If you'll promise not to,
I'm somebody's child,
It's true, in the papers,
Kathleen Vale,
Kitty's choice,
Little Matilda Jane,
Little wee dog,
Merry land of childhood
Moet and shandon for
Mollie Adair, [me,
Mollie darling,
Move your family west,

Off like a rocket,
Poor child of the drunk-
Pullman car, [ard,
Rhine vine Sharley,
Such is fashion,
Take me back home,
Take me from my bed,
Take them away,
The belle of Lincoln Pk,
The fly couldn't help it,
The ivy green,
The little old woman,
The man o' Airlie,
The milliner's daughter

The old kitchen floor,
The song of a clerk,
The unfortunate tailor,
The way daddy went,
The wishing well,
Trumps,
Two little shoes,
Waiting for papa,
When you were seven
teen, Maggie,
When the sun shining,
Why don't you name
the day, Kathleen!
Young old maid.

CONTENTS SONG BOOK No. 31.

'A garden is lady's face,
After the opera's over,
And he's got money,
As I'd nothing to do,
Barney, you'll not,
Blinks, of the staff,
Busy little feet,
Chicago rediviva,
Don't judge a man,
Down in a coal mine,
Dressed in dolly varden
Fascinating little man,
Gloriana Jones, [fireside
Heaven bless the old
I'll leave it all to you,

I'm a Paddy Whack,
I'm number one,
I've something to do,
Jessie was a pretty girl,
Jolly Jonathan,
Lillie's good-night,
Little Fraud,
Meet me to-night,
My love is shy,
Never go back on your
Oh, Sam, [friend,
One O'Leary's cow,
Over the bars,
Papa, stay home,
Roll on, roll on,

Sally in our alley,
Seven o'clock,
She's so fair,
She's the loveliest girl,
Soda water,
Sparkling in the winter,
Still I am not happy,
Susan, Susan,
Sweet Annie St. Clair,
The Broadway,
The buck-skin bag,
The dear little girl,
The Dolly Varden,
The fireman's death,
The gay young swell,

The gipsy band,
The gipsy queen,
The maidens of Jersey,
The man with the drum,
The singin'-skewl,
There's a good time,
The woman in white,
Toddling thro' lanciers,
Twilight in the park,
Under the rose,
What's a woman like,
When I courted Mary,
When the band begins,
Why don't I change,
Ye dinna understand.

CONTENTS SONG BOOK No. 32.

A cup of cold water,
As we parted at the gate
Awfully clever,
Be sure you're right,
Brace up.
He had taking ways,
He's a bashful boy,
He's a lovely waltzer,
Hope for our horses,
Hot cakes in the morn'g,
I love you, [it,
I rather think he'd like
I won't be a nun, [10 cts,
If you love me lend me

In one ear and out,
Keep a stiff upper lip,
Kitty and Ben,
Little waxed mustache,
Lost in the fire,
Maggie darling,
Minnie Gray,
Mother says I mustn't,
Nora darling, [bowl,
Oh, were my love a sugar
Only sleep,
Philosophic Sam,
Poor old Joe,
Pride of the ball,

Pull slow and steady,
Push along, [boys,
Put yourself in place,
Quit dat ticklin' me,
She's my sugar-plum,
Single blessedness a fib,
Smile again, lassie,
Sunshine and shade,
The beauty of season,
The brook's message,
The dashing brunette,
The gay side of life,
The increase of crime,
The Irish speculator,

The Knott family,
The Mississippi tins,
The mixed-up fam'ly,
The style of man for '10,
There's something,
Under de mango tree,
Victorine,
Vite mice,
What Mollie said,
When the milk goes,
We met on the sly,
While there's life,
Widow Mavrone,
Yes, or no.

CONTENTS SONG BOOK No. 33.

Cold water,
Come home, father,
Come home, mother,
Come, sign the pledge,
Don't go in, [rum,
Don't sell my father
Dish't stay late to-night,
Father's come home,
Father's to bless us,
God speed the right,
Good news,
Happy children,
How happy,
How happy are they,
Joyful day,
Oh, drinkseller,

Oh, help little Mary,
Old drinking times,
Out of the tavern,
Please father,
Please give me a penny,
Promise me, dearest,
Pure water be mine,
Sign the pledge,
Song of the reformed,
Take the pledge,
Teetotal anthem,
Teetotaler's battle song,
Temperance,
Temperance reformat'n,
Temperance standard,
The ale-house,

The band of hope,
The bowl,
The child's petition,
The convert,
The cup of misery,
The doings of Jerry,
The drunkard's return,
The drunkard's wife,
The flag of Maine,
The good time coming,
The home of Mary,
The inebriate's lament,
The old oaken bucket,
The patriot spirit,
The rainbow song,
There goes a drunkard,

The slaves of wine,
The standard planted,
The staunch teetotaler,
The teetotaler at home,
The taetotal mill,
The temperance ball,
The temperance cause,
The wife's dream,
The wine cup,
Through every hamlet,
Touch not the fair cup,
Touch not the wine cup,
Try, try again,
United in a joyous band,
Welcome, happy day,
We'll never be drunk's.

CONTENTS CENTENNIAL SONG BOOK No. 34.

A hundred years ago,
A National song,
A national song, No. 2,
A Yankee ship and crew
America,
An ode to Washington,
Battle of Bunker Hill,
Centennial bells,
Columbia rules the sea,
E pluribus unum,
God save America,
Hail Columbia,
Hail to the chief, [blue,
Harrah for white, red,
I love my native land,

Independence-day,
Little major.
My own native land,
New England,
One hundred years ago,
Our country and flag,
Our flag,
Our grandfather's days,
Our Union,
Red, white and blue,
Revolutionary times,
Seventy-six,
Song of "1812,"
Stand up for Uncle Sam
Star-spangled banner,

The American boy,
The American girl,
The army and the navy,
The banner of the free,
The centennial bell,
The corporal's musket,
The evacuation,
The flag of our Union,
The flag of the brave,
The grave of Wash'g'n,
The hills of N. England,
The maids of Columbia,
The Marseilles hymn,
The men of '76,
The Yankee Doodle,

The rock of liberty,
The song of 1876,
The star-gemmed flag,
The sword of Bunker
The Yankee boy, [Hill,
The Yankee girls,
The Yankee volunteer,
To the west, [dawned,
Triumphantly morning
Uncle Sam's a hundred,
Uncle Sam's farm,
Unfurl the glorious ban
Viva l'America, [ner,
Washington, star of W.,
Where liberty dwells,

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